

TALES:
FROM THE
CRYPT

THE
MURDER OF
DORIS



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEAR, HEAR! BACK AGAIN, ENT BACK FOR MORE CHILLS AND SHIVERS! WE'LL COME IN! WE INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR AND I'LL GOLE YOU OUT YOUR SHARE! YEP! IT'S ME, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, YOUR MOST F'IN HORROR! JUST BY YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT FOU-ODDLE, EARTHENWARE URM OVER THERE, AND I'LL ENTERTAIN YOU! WAAPS IN THE URM ON THAT'S WHAT'S LEFT OF WHITEY WHITTAKER? WHO'S NEP? WELL, YOU JUST SETTLE DOWN AND I'LL LET YOU HEAR WHITEY'S STORY IN HIS VERY OWN WORDS! READY? WHITEY CALLS THIS GABAYEENS CREATION...

GAS-TLY PROSPECTS!



JEFF WHITTAKER'S BY A HOLE! THOUGH SOME OF THE BOYS FROM THE WAGON TRAIN I'D JOINED UP WITH TO COME WEST TO CALIFORNIA HAD NICKNAMED ME 'WHITEY'! THAT'S 'CAUSE I WAS SO CHICKEN, AND MY HAIR'D TURNED BRAY-WHITE LONG YEARS BEFORE! BUT I'D BEEN A PROSPECTIV' FOOL ALL WIFE, AN' WHEN THEY FOUND THE YELLER STUFF OVER AT SUTTER'S SAW MILL IN 1848, I PACKED MY ODDS AN' HEADED WEST WITH THE REST OF THE FORTY-NINERS...

WAL, WHITEY! WE'LL BE IN CALIFORNIA BY THIS TIME. NEST WEEK, WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

NEP, I'M READY! I'VE GOT FER THEM GOLD FIELDS! BORNNA STAKE ME OUT A GLAYN' AND FAR ME A FORTUNE!

YEP! THERE WERE MY PLANS! I HAD LOTS O' HIGH HOPES IN THEM DAYS! SOON AS WE HIT SACRAMENTO, I LET OUT UP THE HILLY.

KEEP GOING STRANGER! TRY THIS LAND'S ALL STAGED OUT!

SO! TEN MILES FURTHER UP-RIVER!



WOULD TAKE ME LONG FIND OUT THAT MOST O' THE GOLD'D BEEN PLAYED OUT BY THE TIME THAT I GOT THERE! YELLED-HUNGRY DRIFTERS'D TAKEN SLIPPED SHIPS ROUND THE CAPE O' GOOD HOPE AN' BEATEN US OVER-LEADERS TO THE FIELDS...

THIS STREAM'S BEEN PANNED OUT ALREADY!



FINALLY! I DECIDED TO TRY UP IN THE HILLS! I'D HEARD TALK ABOUT HIGH YIELDS NEW FOUND! I HOUND ME A-BITCHIN' SO'S I COULD HUNT BY OWN WITTLES & PICK-AGE AN' A SMOKEL T'DIE WITH AN' SOME CANNED BEANS! SPENT EVERY LAST DIME I OWNED...

BETTER TAKE O'MORE SHELLS, STRANGER! GOTTA WATCH OUT FOR OLAM JUMPERS UP IN THE HILLS!

OH! THAT SO?



LE' ME TELL YOU, THAT'S BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY, THEM CALIFORNIA HILLS! TOMORROW MORN' WHISPERIN' OVERHEAD! RUSHIN' STREAMS CASCADE' OVER ROCKS! MUST LOOK LAYER LAYER LIKE LOOKIN'-GLASSES! I PITCHED ME A TENT NEXT TO ONE O' THEM QUAY LAKES AND MADE ME A CAMP...

THIS SNOW IS PURE, BUT IT AIN'T GETTIN' ME RIGHT! I'NDORR, I START DIZZIN'!



I TRIED A FEW SPOTS WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS! THEN I FOUND ME A STREAM FLOWIN' INTO THE LAKE! SHE WAS A FAST-RUNNIN' STREAM - A-COMIN' DOWN FROM THEM HILLS AND A-BUBBLIN' OUT INTO THE QUAY LAKE... STIRRED IT ALL UP ROUND THE SPOT.

WHAT'S THAT? SOME THIN SHINN' IN THE WATER?



IT WERE GOLD ALL RIGHT! AND LOUGH, WHAT A HIGH DEPOSIT! THAT THERE STREAM MUSTA BEEN ROLLIN' THEM RUBBETS DOWN FROM THE HILLS SINCE TIME BEGUN... AN' THEY WERE ALL LAYIN' RIGHT THERE FOR ME...

IT'LL TAKE ME A YEAR TO CLEAR OUT FACE STRIKE! I'M RIGHT! RIGHT!



SO I STARTED PANNIN'! I FIGURED ON CLEANIN' OUT THE MOUTH O' THE STREAM WHERE SHE EMPTIED INTO THE LAKE... THEN SCRAM' BY WAY UP-STREAM TILL I'D PLAYED THE STRIKE OUT...

LOOK AT THAT RUBBET! MUST BE A FOUR-DUNCER, AT LEAST!



THEN 'BOUT A MONTH AFTER I'D STARTED WORKIN' BY CLAIM, IT HAPPENED. THIS BIG BURLY-LOOKIN' CRITTER SHOWS UP. I'D PANNED ME 'BOUT FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH O' GOLD BY THAT TIME AN' WAS FEELIN' PRETTY GOOD. THAT WAS WHERE I MADE MY *BIG MISTAKE!* I GUESS HE'D BEEN SPYIN' ON ME... AN' I LET HIM GET TOO CLOSE.



HONKY, STRANGER, WHERE YUH HEADED?

NO PLACE, BUB! IT'S YOU, WHAT'S GON'?

HE WHIPS OUT HIS COLT '45 AND PANS IT TWICE BEFORE I KNOW WHAT HAPPENS...



I'M TAKIN' OVER YOUR CLAIM, *RIGHT NOW!*

WHA...??

THE TWO RED-HOT LEAD SLUGS OUCH ME IN THE BUTT AN' I FEEL OVER THE PAIN IS *SOMETHIN' AWFUL*, AN' I'M *BEYOND MAD!* WHEN HE COMES OVER TO SEE IF I'M DONE FOR, I KICK OUT AT HIM! HIS COLT GOES PINK!



HUH...?

NOBODY... STEALS WHAT'S *MINE*... YUH OPENERS COYOTE!

THE GUN LANDS OFF IN THE BRUSH AND THE BURLY GUY DIVES AFTER IT! I SEES MY CHANCE AND, GETTIN' T'WY FEET, NIGHTTALKS IT FOR CAMP.



LORDY, THEM SLUGS 'S *JAWIN'* IN MY MIDDLE!

BLAST! WHERE'S THAT CURSED IRON? © 1997-2000 DC/TT

I KEEP GOIN', EVEN THOUGH THE PAIN IS *ELLIN' ME!* BACK O' ME, I HEAR HIM SHOUT WHEN HE SPIES ME '45...



WON'T GO YOU NO GOOD TO *YUH*, STRANGER!

IF I KIN BIT Y'N BROTHER!

A BLUE WHISTLES PAST MY EAR AS I TUMBLE INTO CAMP! I GRAB MY SHOTGUN AND THE BOX O' SHELLS, OVER BEHIND A ROCK, AN' LET GO WITH BOTH BARRELS...



HERE YOU *MURDERIN SHANE!* NOW, WE'RE *EVEN-STEVEN!*

THE BURLY CRITTER MUSTA CAUGHT THE BURLIEST SLUG! ON THE SHOTGUN BARREL. 'CAUSE HE'S BEHIND A TREE WHEN THE BUCKSHOT PEPPERS 'ROUND HIM.



GRAB, STRANGER! I CAN *WAIT!* LET'S SEE HOW LONG YOU *KB HOLD OUT* WITH *TWO SLUGS IN YOUR BUTT!*

SO WE SIT THERE HIM BEHIND THE BIG OL' PINE, AND ME CRO-CKING BEHIND THAT ROCK, BLEEDIN' LIKE A LEAKY WATER BAG.

ONE OF US HAS NOT TO FALL ASLEEP, AN' I AINT TIRER!

OH, LORDY IF WE DON'T GET ME, I'LL BLEED TO DEATH!

I STUFF THE SHOTGUN SHELLS FROM THE BOX INTO MY POCKETS AND SIT BACK TO WAIT! I KNOW I'M GOIN' TO DIE! BUT I AINT GOINNA LET HIM LIVE EITHER...

YOU'LL NEVER TAKE THIS CLAIM, YUN BRASS! I'LL GET YUN FIRST! I SWEAR IT!

I'M WAITIN' OL' TIMER!

I BLESS I MUSTA PASSED OUT FROM THE PAIN, 'CAUSE THE NEXT THING I KNOW, MY EYES POP OPEN AND HE'S STANDIN' OVER ME WITH A KNIFE.

THAT'LL TEACH YUN NOT TO FALL ASLEEP!

I'M SHAKIN' AT HIM, AND HE'S STARRIN' BACK AT ME! THE KNIFE IS DRAININ' BLOOD! I TRY TO GRAB FOR MY GUN, BUT I CAN'T MOVE A MUSCLE! FUNKY, BUT I DON'T FEEL ANY PAIN, EITHER! SO I JONGWID THAT I'M DEAD...

STOP SHAKIN' AT ME, YUN OLD COOT!

BUT I JUST KEEP SHAKIN'! HE SPITS AT ME, AN' DOES AN' GETS MY PICK-AXE AN' SHOWS.

I'M GOINNA JURY YUN, YUN OLD SEIZER! THEN I'M GOINNA FINISH WORKIN' YER CLAIM! ONLY NOW, IT'S MY CLAIM!

SO HE STARTS BITIN' THE GROUND IS HARD AND HE CURSES A LOT! I JUST KEEP SHAKIN' AT HIM! HE'S GETTIN' MADDER AND MADDER.

AH, TO BECK WITH IT! THIS IS GOOD ENOUGH!

HE BRASS ME AND BRASS ME OVER TO THE SHALLOW GRAVE HE'S DAMN OUT OF THE ROCKY LOAM! HE KILLS ME IN.

THERE! REST IN PEACE, YUN OLD PRAYER-BOO!

SO I ROLL INTO THE GRAVE AND LAND FACE UP STAYIN' AT HIM AND BRINNIN' AT HIM! AND HE'S RED AS A BEET, HE'S SO MAD! HE TELLS AT ME AND FLINGS A SHOVEL-FULL OF DIRT INTO MY FACE...

STOP STAYIN' AT ME! STOP BRINNIN' AT ME! SHUT YOUR EYES WHEN YOU DEAD! CLOSE YER MOUTH!



FURTY SOON I'M ALL COVERED, AN' LAYIN' NICE AN' COZY IN MY GRAVE! I HEAR HIS HOE-HEALED BOOTS CRUNCHIN' AROUND OVER ME AS HE STAMPS THE GROUND DOWN HARD, SO'S IT WOON'T LOOZE FRESH AIR...

HEH, HEH! YOU WERE WYONE, EH, OLD TIMERS! I GOT YOU FIRST, AFTER ALL!



I FIGURE I LAY THERE A WEEK OR SO IN THE SMOOD! THE CRABBLIN' THINGS START WORKIN' ON ME! I I DON'T FEEL 'EM, BUT I KNOW THEY'RE THERE 'CAUSE I CAN HEAR 'EM SCRATCHIN' AROUND ME! THEN, AFTER A LONG TIME, I HEAR SOMETHIN' UP ABOVE, CLAMIN' AT THE GROUND...



IT'S A WILD CAT GRAB ME UP! IT CLEARS THE SOO OFF'S MY FACE AND SHOULDER, GRABS MY COLLAR BETWEEN ITS PANGS, AND PULLS ME UP TO A BITTIN' POSITION...



THEN, AFORE IT KIN START RIPPIN' ME TO SHREDS, ANOTHER WILD CAT SHOWS UP...



RIGHT ABEY THEY START BITTIN' AND HOWLIN' AT EACH OTHER! I SIT THERE, BRINNIN' AT THEM



THEY BAIL INTO ONE ANOTHER, BUT SOON THE ONE THEY DUG ME UP GOES OFF A-SCREECHIN' AND A-BURNIN' HIS WOUNDS! THEN THE LATECOMER WHE WHO COMES OVER, BITTIN' AT ME, AND LOPES OFF HIMSELF! I GUESS I'M TOO FAR SORE TO MAKE GOOD 2 A TIN' ANYMORE...



SO I SIT THERE STARK AT MY TENT, LISTENIN' TO THE BURLY BUI'S SNORN! HE SLEEPS RIGHT THROUGH THE WELLS.



IN THE MORNING, HE COMES OUT OF THE TENT! FOR A MINUTE I THINK HIS EYES IS BORNIN' FLY RIGHT OUTTA HIS HAIR.



HE COMES OVER TO ME, LOOKIN' A LITTLE GREEN AROUND THE GILLS! HIS MOUTH IS DRIBBLIN' A LITTLE SPITTLE, LIKE HE'S BEEN SICKIN' ON A BAR O' SOAP.



BUT I JUST SIT THERE GAWPIN' AT HIM! I CAN TELL HE'S GETTIN' SOME 'CAUSE HIS EYES IS REDDENIN' UP! HE HAULS OFF AND SICKS ME IN THE FACE, AND I FLOPS BACKWARDS INTO MY SHALLOW GRAVE.



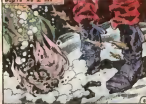
HE SCRAMBLES OFF TOWARD THE TENT AN' COMES BACK WITH THE PICK-AXE AN' SHOVEL! HE GRABS HOLD O' ME AND GRABS ME DOWN T' THE LAKE.



HE TIES THE SHOVEL AN' THE PICK-AXE T' MY FEET WITH SOME ROPE.



THEN HE HAULS ME INTO THE LAKE! HE PULLS ME OUT AS DEEP AS HE CAN SO AN' LETS ME SETTLE TO THE BOTTOM! I SHIP AT HIS HOB-MAILED BOOTS AS I HIT



THE WATER STARTS FILLIN' INTO MY SUITS. AN 'URGLIN' INTO MY LUNGS! SOME NOBBY FISH DOONE 'RUBBINS'...PEERIN' AT ME/ONE OF 'EM TAKES A BIP AT MY HAND! I SWAY BACK AND FORTH LAZILY...



WHERE THE RUBBIN' STREAM EMPTIED INTO THE LAKE, A SNAKY CURRENT SWIRLS! I'M LAVIN' RIGHT SNACK IN THE MIDDLE OF IT! PRETTY SOON, I'M TURNIN' AND TWISTIN', AND THE ROPES IS RUBBIN' ON THE SHARP EDGES OF THE ROCKS...



IT TAKES ABOUT A WEEK FOR THE ROPES TO SAW THROUGH! MEANWHILE THE FISH HAVE BEEN PECKIN' AWAY... AND BY THE TIME I'M OUT FREE, I'M IN PRETTY BAD SHAPE! I'M ALL WATER-LOGGED AND BLED-OUT, AND THE BAGES THAT HAVE FORMED IN MY INSIDES FORGE ME TO THE SURFACE...



I GUESS THOSE CRAZY CURRENTS MUSTA DRAGGED ME 'ROUND AND 'ROUND, 'CAUSE I POP UP RIGHT AT THE MOUTH OF THE STREAM WHERE SUART-BOY IS PANNIN'! HE NEARLY FALLS IN THE WATER WHEN HE SPOTS ME...



HE STARTS YELLIN' AND SCREAMIN' AT ME, BUT I JUST STARE AT HIM HIM AND BRIB REAL SALLY-LIKE! ONLY I DON'T LOOK TOO FOPPOFOFO ANYMORE! FACT IS I CANVEL PRETTY BAD POP! AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT HE COMPLAINS OF AS HE GRABS ME ARMED...



HE LINGS ME OVER TO THE CLEANING AND LAYS ME IN THE MIDDLE! THEN HE STARTS DRAGGIN' OVER LOGS HE'S BEEN COLLECTIN'...



I GUESS HE WAS GETTIN' READY TO BUILD HISSELF A CABIN WITH THEM LOGS AND STAY OVER THE WINTER! ANYWAY HE DECIDES TO SACRIFICE 'EM ALL FOR ME! HE TOSSES ME ON THE FIRE...



I'M LAYIN' THERE ON THE PILE OF LOGS IN THE MIDDLE O' THE CLEARIN'! ALL AROUND, THE BRUSH IS DRY, 'CAUSE IT'S BEEN A DRY SUMMER! RIGHT AWAY, THE FLAMES ARE LEAPIN' TOWARD ME...



THERE'S A TERRIFIC BOOM... AND I BLOW OFF! THE SHOT-GUN SHELLS I'D PACKED INTO MY POCKETS GO OFF LIKE A DYNAMITE CHARGE! I RIP INTO A THOUSAND PIECES, AND THE EXPANDING GASES AND COMPRESSED STEAM INSIDE ME SENDS THE FLAMES WHIRLIN' FLYIN' THROUGH THE AIR...



THE HEAT IS TERRIFIC OF COURSE, I DON'T FEEL NOTHIN', BUT I CAN HEAR MY WATER-LOGGED BOOTS A-POOPIN' AND A-POPIN'! I GUESS I BLACKENED UP A BIT, AND THE WATER IN MY ROTTED CLOTHES OBIES OUT! SOON THEY START TO BURN! I KIN SENSE SOMETHIN' STRANGE GOIN' ON INSIDE ME... LIKE I'M EXPLODIN' FROM THE STEAM AND GASIN' THEM!



SOME OF 'EM LANDS ON THE BURLY GUY, AND HE'S SO BUSY FEELIN' ME OFF IN 'EM AND PATTIN' OUT HIS BURNIN' CLOTHES THAT HE DON'T NOTICE I'VE ALSO LANDED ALL AROUND THE EDGE OF THE CLEARIN'... IN THE DRY BRUSH... IN THE T-POCK-LIKE FIRES... EVERYWHERE!



WARP A PACE I START! IN A COUPLE O' MINUTES, THE WHOLE CLEARIN' IS SURROUNDED BY A CIRCLE O' FLAME. A WHITE HOT WALL GOVIN' HIGH ON THE BURLY CRITTER! HE DON'T STAND A CHANCE O' GETTIN' THROUGH IT! THAT LONG 'TIL HE STARTS SWIRLIN' 'EM PACE!



...BUT AFTER A WHILE IT'S QUIET... 'CEPT FOR THE CRACKLIN' O' THE FIRE AS IT SWEEPS ON THROUGH THE DRY WOODED HILLS! I GUESS I KIN REST EASY NOW! I PLUMB FINISHED MY WORK!

HEH, HEH! YOU PLUMB HAVIN', WHITEY? AND IT SHOW WAR A... AHEH... IT BURE WAS A DOOPY O' A TALE, EN, KID-DIE? YOU KNOW, WHEN I FIRST TOLD YOU YARN TO MY SPOT EDITORS, THEY CONFESSED THAT THEY NEVER KNEW A CORPSE COULD WRITE HIS OWN STORY! I STRAIGHTENED THEM OUT, THOUGH! WHITEY COULDN'T WRITE HIS OWN

NAME 'TIL I STARTED THE WHOLE THING TO ME! HEH, HEH! A REAL SHOOT WRITER, EN? WELL, NOW I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE KNUFF-KEEPER! I'LL SEE YOU LATER ON!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

GREETINGS, GORY GRAVE-SHOULDERS! IT'S ME, THE VAULT-KEEPER, AGAIN! TIME TO GUESS-SPOT THE GRIFF-KEEPER'S MAS OME MORE! SO DRAG YOUR BATTERED BOOIES INTO THE VAULT AND STRETCH THEM OUT ON THAT SAGE OF ICE OVER THERE! IT'LL KEEP YOU COOL...WHICH IS THE PROPER MOOD FOR THIS CHILLING TALK OF ICE, SNOW, AND NOT LOVE I CALL.

A Hollywood Ending!



HUGH HOWARDS, FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD MOVIE PRODUCER AND CELEBRATED SPORTSMAN AND WORLD TRAVELER, GUIDED HIS PRIVATE TRANSPORT PLANE LOW OVER THE GLARING ICE-FIELDS OF THE FROZEN NORTH.

"THERE'S AN AWKING SETTLEMENT DOWN THERE, MR. HOWARD!"

"ALL RIGHT, EVANS! TELL THE PUBLICITY BOYS TO FASTEN THEIR SAFETY BELTS! WE'RE GOING IN!"



DOWN BELOW THE SLEAZING AIRPLANE, FUR-CLAD FIGURES RANTED FROM THEIR WILDS, WAVING AND CHATTERING...

THEY SEE US!

THERE'S A LEVEL SPOT... CAST OF THE SETTLEMENT! I'M GOING TO BRING 'EM DOWN ON IT!



SOON THE SKY-GIANT'S CO-PILOTS TOUCHED THE SURFACE OF THE CHOSSEN ICE EXPANSE AND CAME TO A STOP! THE DELINE ESKIMO POPULATION STROGED ABOUT THE PLANE...

WELL? C'MON YOU BUYS! LET'S GET SOME FUR TUNES AND GET OUT OF HERE!

YEE, MR HOWARDS!

OHAY, SIR!



MR HOWARDS STEPPED FROM THE PLANE AND ADDRESSED THE GATHERED ARCTIC INHABITANTS...

ANYBODY HERE SPEAK ENGLISH?

I I SPEAK ENGLISH!



MR HOWARDS TURNED TO THE FUR-CLAD FIGURE THAT STEPPED FORWARD THROUGH THE CROWD! IT WAS A GIRL...

GOOD! MY NAME IS HOWARDS! HUSH HOWARDS! I'M A HOLLYWOOD PRODUCER! YOU'RE NOT AN ESKIMO!

NO, MR HOWARDS! I AM AN AMERICAN!



THE GIRL SMILED AT HUSH! HER EYES SPARKLED! SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE SOO-FORGOTTEN PLACES?

I LIVE HERE WITH THESE PEOPLE! THAT WOODEN BUILDING IS MY HOME! MY GUARDIAN MENTOR TOLD ME HERE SIX YEARS AGO!



HUSH STUDIED THE ATTRACTIVE GIRL STANDING BEFORE HIM! HE'D NEVER SEEN A MORE PHOTOGENIC FACE...

YOU SAY YOU LIVE THERE IN THAT SHACK? IS IT HEATED?

WHY, YES! THERE'S AN OIL STOVE IN IT! WHAT MAKES YOU ASK?



HUSH TOOK THE GIRL'S BITTERED HAND AND STARTED TOWARD THE SNOW-LADEN FRAME BUILDING...

C'MON! I WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR FRAME!

MY FRAME?! WELL, REALLY NOW, MR HOWARDS... I...



LOOK! DON'T GET IN A HUFF! I'M A HOLLYWOOD PRODUCER! THIS IS STRICTLY BUSINESS! IF YOU'RE NOT WHAT IT TAKES, I CAN MAKE A STAR OUT OF YOU!

A... A... A START! WHAT'S THAT?

HUNT HOW LONG DID YOU SAY YOU'VE BEEN UP HERE?

SIX YEARS! 'DADDY'... THAT'S MY GUARDIAN. DOCTOR WHEEM... BROUGHT ME HERE AFTER THE ACCIDENT!

ACCIDENT? YES! MY REAL FATHER AND I WERE IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT! FATHER WAS DOCTOR WHEEM'S COLLABORATOR! FATHER WAS KILLED! I LOST MY MEMORY. I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT MY FATHER LOOKED LIKE!

ANNIEJA, HUH?

I GUESS SO! ANYWAY, 'DADDY' BROUGHT ME HERE! HE HAD TO TEACH ME ALL OVER AGAIN! I'D FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING! I'D EVEN FORGOTTEN HOW TO WALK AND TALK! IT WAS AWFUL BUT 'DADDY' WAS PATIENT, AND I LEARNED QUICKLY.

THEN YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MOVIES OR MOVIE STARS?

I'M AFRAID NOT, MR. HOWARD! BUT LOOK... WE'D BETTER TAKE OFF OUR APRONS NOW THAT WE'RE 'GROWN'!

THE GIRL SLIPPED OUT OF HER HOODED PARKA AND PULLED OFF HER FUR PARTS! HUSH QUICKLY FOLLOWED HER EXAMPLE! FINALLY SHE STOOD BEFORE HIM SLAD ONLY IN A SIMPLE SWEATER AND SLACKS.

TERRIFIC! TERRY! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

TERRY! IT'S SHORT FOR THERESA! TERRY ARLEN!

YOU'RE A SWEET KID, TERRY! I'D LIKE TO HELP YOU! WHERE IS YOUR GUARDIAN? THIS DOCTOR WHEEM? I WANT TO ASK HIM PERMISSION TO TAKE YOU TO HOLLYWOOD!

HE... HE'S NEVER LET ME GO! HE'S FORGOTTEN ME TO EVEN LEARN THE SETTLEMENT! BUT... IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY ASK HIM! HE'S AT THE TRAINING POST! HE'LL BE BACK IN TWO DAYS!

TWO DAYS LATER, THE SHINING PRIVATE AIR-TRANSPORT STILL SAT ON THE OPEN ICE-FIELD OUTSIDE THE SETTLEMENT! HUGH HOWARDS HAD STAYED WAITING FOR DOCTOR WHEEMS TO RETURN BY DOG-SLED FROM THE DISTANT TRAINING-POST...

LOOK HERE, EH? WHEN IN BLAZES ARE WE LEAVING THIS FROG HOLE? IT'S BEEN TWO DAYS! I GOT A WIFE AND KIDS!

SORRY, BOYS! MR. HOWARDS HAS BUSINESS HERE!

YEAH! BUSINESS WITH THAT GANDY'S BEEN IN TOGETHER!



INDEED THEY HAD BEEN TOGETHER... ALMOST EVERY CHANCE THEY COULD! THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT TERRY. SOMETHING HUGH'S NEVER FELT ABOUT A GIRL BEFORE...

I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU, TERRY! I NEED YOU! YOU'VE GOT TO COME BACK TO THE STATES WITH ME! I WANT TO MARRY YOU!

OH, HUGH! DO YOU MEAN IT? I'VE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE BEFORE! HOW CAN I BE SURE?



HUGH CAUGHT TERRY IN HIS ARMS!



OH, HUGH! MUM!

NOW ARE YOU SURE, TERRY?



SUDDENLY A BLAST OF ICE WIND SWEEP THROUGH THE MOON AS THE DOOR WAS FLUNG OPEN...

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF HER!

MUM! I'VE GOT MY DADDY!



THE FUR-CLAD DOCTOR STAMPEDED INTO THE ROOM...

GET OUT! LEAVE HER ALONE! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!

MUM, DADDY! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! HUGH WANTS TO MARRY ME AND TAKE ME TO HOLLYWOOD!

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR!



NEVER! I FOUND IT! YOU'RE NOT LEAVING, TERRY! YOU'RE STAYING HERE WITH ME!

BUT DOCTOR! I LOVE TERRY! I CAN GIVE HIM SO MUCH!

HUGH WANTS TO MAKE A MOVIE! STAY OUT OF HIS! HE'S A PRODUCER!





YES! I'VE HEARD OF YOU, MR. HOWARD! YOU'RE UP HERE ON A PUBLICITY SPURT! IS TERRY GOING TO BE ONE OF YOUR PUBLICITY BABS TOO? GET 'EM OUT!

OH, SIR! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT IT...

MUSH! BAST!



TERRY DARTED AFTER HUSH HAD SWATHED HIS FUR-COAT AND STARTED OUT OF THE DOOR...

YOU, YOU'RE NOT GOING! YES, ARE YOU, DARLING?

I'VE GOT TO GO! TERRY! IF YOU FEEL YOU REALLY LOVE ME, AND YOU WANT TO COME WITH ME...



...MEET ME AT THE PLANE IN AN HOUR!

I'LL... I'LL... BE THERE! I'LL BE THERE!



HUSH TROGGED OFF AND TERRY WENT BACK INSIDE...

WELL, IS HE GOING AWAY?

YES, DADDY! HE'S GOING!



EXHAUSTED FROM HIS TRIP, DOCTOR WHEELS LAY DOWN TO REST AND FELL ASLEEP! WHEN HE AWOKE AN HOUR LATER...

TERRY! I HEARD A TERRY! TERRY! WHERE ARE YOU?



THE ROAR OF AN AIRPLANE REVERBERATED OVER THE FROZEN WASTES! HIGH ABOVE THE TINY EDKING SETTLEMENT, TERRY SAT BESIDE HUSH IN THE COCKPIT OF THE HUGE TRANSPORT...

OH, MIGHT I'M SO, SO FAST! IF ONLY TO HAD DADDY'S PERMISSION TO GO - INSTEAD OF HAVING HAD TO SNEAK AWAY!

DON'T WORRY, TERRY! HELL GET OVER IT! YOU DESERVE A LITTLE HAPPINESS AFTER THESE LAST SIX YEARS!



AS HUSH HOWARD'S FORTUNE AIRLINER DISAPPEARED INTO THE ARCTIC BLUE, DOCTOR WHEELS HASTILY HITTED UP HIS DOG-TEAM...

IF I CAN GET TO THE TRAG'S POST AND CATCH THE (NOW) WIP MAIL-PACKET, I MAY BE ABLE TO GET THERE IN TIME! MUSH!

HEH, HEH! SO MUCH SPIRITED TERRY OUT OF THE COLD-COUNTRY TO THE LAND OF PALM TREES AND RIVER LIGHTS... HOLLYWOOD! THEY WERE MARRIED AS SOON AS THEY ARRIVED, AND THE FILM COLONY WENT WILD OVER THE PRODUCER'S NEW BRIDE AND FUTURE STAR! SCREEN TESTS WERE MADE, A SCRIPT WAS CHOSEN, AND SHOOTING BEGAN.



ALL WENT WELL FOR A FEW WEEKS! THEN THE MAKE-UP MAN CAME TO SEE HUSH...

GET, GET EYES ABOUT YOUR NOSE. MISED HOWARD! SHE EES A LONELY WOMAN... BUT HER SKIN LATELY... WELL.

SPEAK UP, MARQUEL! WHAT IS IT?



I HAV TROUBLE LATELY, HUSH! SHE IS... HARRASD! HER BOY EES GAY CRACKERS! I CANNOT DO ANY-THING WITH EET!

I... I HADNT NOTICED! I'LL SPEAK TO HER!



THAT NIGHT, HUSH TOLD TERRY ABOUT THE MAKE-UP MAN'S COMPLAINT.

WHAT IS IT, BEARD? ARENT YOU GETTING ENOUGH REST? AM I WORNING YOU TOO HARD?

I DON'T KNOW HUSH! I HAVENT BEEN FEELING WELL! I IM ILL!



THE NEXT DAY, TERRY DIDNT SHOW UP AT THE STUDIO! HUSH RETURNED TO THEIR PALATIAL BEVERLY HILLS HOME TO FETCH HER...

TERRY! WHATS WRONG? WHY ARE YOU WEARING THOSE SLONES... AND THAT FEEL?

SOMETHING'S WRONG, HUSH! SOMETHING'S TERRIBLY WRONG! BUT I'LL GET OVER IT!



HOWEVER, TERRY DIDNT GET OVER IT! IN FACT, STRANGER THINGS SEEM TO HAPPEN...

LORD, HONEY! WHY SO MUCH PERFUME? YOU REEK FROM IT!

OH, HUSH! NEVER! I NEVER SHOULD HAVE COME TO HOLLYWOOD!



IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, TERRY LOCKED HERSELF IN HER ROOM, REFUSING TO COME OUT! SHE BROKED HER FOOD SENT UP AND LEFT OUTSIDE HER DOOR.

TERRY! YOUVE GOT TO LET ME IN! TERRY! PLEASE! I'LL GET A DOCTOR!

IT'S... TOO LATE, HONEY! SO AWAY! LEAVE ME... ALONE!



AND THEN DOCTOR WHEEMS ARRIVED! HE'D TRAVELED BY BOG- GLED, MAIL-PACKET, TRAIN, AND PLANE TO GET TO THE HOWARDS HOME...

DOCTOR WHEEMS: "WHERE IS SHE, HOWARDS? I'VE GOT TO TAKE HER BACK BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! YOU NEVER SHOULD HAVE TAKEN HER AWAY!"



SHE'S UP IN HER ROOM, DOCTOR! SHE REFUSED TO SEE ANYONE! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HER! FIRST MY MAKE-UP MAN COMPLAINED ABOUT HER SKIN, THEN SHE STARTED WEARING GLOVES AND A FEEL! NOW, SHE'S SCREAMED HERSELF! HER VOICE SOUNDED SO STRANGE! TODAY, SHE EVEN REFUSED TO ANSWER ME WHEN I CALLED!



THEN IT... IT IS TOO LATE! TAKE ME TO HER!

WHAT IS IT, DOCTOR? TELL ME! WHEN THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED WITH HIS DYING BREATH, ARLEN BEHELD ME TO TRY OUR NEW PROCESS ON TERRY!



THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED ON THE HIGHWAY JUST OUTSIDE MY LABORATORY! WE WORKED WITH MONKEYS, BUT FOUND THAT EVEN THOUGH WE REVIVED THEM AFTER THEY'D BEEN A FEW MINUTES DEAD, THEY CONTINUED TO DEGRAD! GOLD WAS THE ONLY ANSWER! GOLD... TO PRESERVE THEM!

YOU REVIVED THEM AFTER DEATH?



YES, MR. HOWARDS! TERRY ARLEN WAS DEAD! I REVIVED HER! THAT WAS THE EXPERIMENT PROFESSOR ARLEN AND I HAD BEEN WORKING ON! I RUSHED HER TO THAT ARCTIC SETTLEMENT TO KEEP HER FROM DEGRADING! I HAD TO TEACH HER EVERYTHING ALL OVER AGAIN; THE REVIVING ACTION REVERTS THE PATIENT TO INFANTHOOD! TERRY HAS ACTUALLY BEEN DEAD FOR OVER SIX YEARS!

GOOD LORD! HERE, DOCTOR!

THIS IS HER ROOM!



HOWARDS AND WHEEMS FORCED OPEN TERRY'S DOOR! AS IT SWUNG AHEAD, THE FETID RANCID ODOR OF DEATH BURNED THEIR NOSTRILS! TERRY LAY UPON HER BED IN A FLIMSY PINK GOWN! HER FLESH WAS ROTTEN UPON HER BONES! HER FACE WAS A GRAY, BRULL-LIKE DEATH-MASK... ITS BARED TEETH SET IN AN IDIOTIC GRIN! A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWIFT OVER EACH AS HE STARED AT THE SHAPeless PUTRID REMAINS OF HIS ONCE LOVELY WIFE...


COME, MY BOY! WE CAN'T HELP HER NOW!

OH, GEE!



HEH, HEH! SO THAT'S WHY TERRY DOWNED HERSELF WITH PERFORME! AFTER ALL... HOW MANY CAN A BOB STAND, EVEN A DEAD BODY! POOR HUSB! WELL, A DEAD WIFE IS BETTER THAN NO WIFE AT ALL... STONE COLD THAT IS! MAKE, IF TERRY'S STAYED UP NORTH, SHE'D HAVE LASTED INDEFINITELY, INSTEAD OF DUFFING ON THE ROOF! I'LL GET THOSE HOT BLIES LIGHTS! DIDN'T HELP THE SITUATION, EITHER! OH, WELL! SHE'D PROBABLY HAVE BEEN A ROTTEN ACTRESS ANYWAY! NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THE DRY-KEEPER 'STE! SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAD... THE HALL OF HONOR!





ACID TEST!

"If you think I'm going to divorce you, Homer Wormwood, you're insane! I know how much you've come to hate me . . . and the feeling is mutual . . . but you're not getting away from me so easily! I've given up the best years of my life to you and you'll continue to support me as long as I live!"

Homer watched his wife disappear into the kitchen, and a weary smile flared across his face. *Here it goes our way, Edna, he thought . . . as long as you live, eh? It may be a good deal less time than you think!*

His fingers shook as he took from his pocket a small bottle marked: CAUTION: SULPHURIC ACID! He glanced furtively toward the kitchen door, then removed the bottle cap and poured the contents of the vial into the drink he had been preparing for Edna. *This was the easiest way out!* Put Edna to the acid test, in a manner of speaking . . . and watch the agony of her fatal failure!

His wife's voice was grating on his ears again, convincing the argument he had purposely begun the moment he had returned from work that night. He wouldn't have to submit much longer to that despicable voice, Homer mused. *Sulphuric was great at bringing peace to people!*

It was year six of Homer Wormwood's marital hell, and just the night before he had determined to make this the last year . . . the last month, week and day! He had quietly cried to squem loose by divorce, but it had resulted only in Edna redoubling her vituperative squalling about his inefficiency as a help-mate, provider and companion. Divorce was totally out of the question, she had screamed at him so often that it had become only a vague rumble in his ears. They were stuck with each

other . . . forever! And Homer had gradually come to realize that Edna lived the state of things . . . thrived on his being trapped for life . . . exulted over her ability to make him cringe and quail before her razor-sharp tongue. And realization that Edna derived enjoyment from these furious ruses, had inspired Homer's plan for freedom. He had begun the fight tonight with the idea of getting her wound up in another of her turbulent tantrums . . . was praying that she would become blind with pent-up rage! So blind that she would gulp down her drink without a moment's hesitation!

"Haven't you got anything to say in your own defense, you miserable fool?" Edna had retorted the moment she was standing opposite him, her face flushed with the heat of her own words.

Not another word, Homer cautioned himself. *My silence always infuriates her. A couple more minutes of raving with no answer from me, and she'll grab that drink with unreasoning fury and gulp it down!*

Words continued to pour out of Edna like a raging torrent, and Homer stood his ground and looked sheepishly at the carpet. Suddenly, as though exhausted by her own violent clamoring, Edna stopped and perked up the cocktail glass Homer had filled for her. She held it poised in front of her lips.

She's going to drink it now! he thought. *If I keep up this detested car act just a moment longer . . .*

"Pahhh!" Edna started at that moment. "If there's anything I detest, it's a man who acts like a whipped dog! Maybe *you* will stir you up!" And with that, Edna hunched her drink in Homer's bewildered face.

A blanket of pain seared into his brain. His eyes became orbs of screaming hot agony . . . the trench of his own tortured flesh checked his nostrils. And the last thing Homer Wormwood heard, before a veil of unconsciousness descended upon him, was the wail of his own voice stretching aloud a single word: "ACID ACID . . . ACID . . . !"

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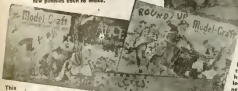
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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Complete the old Crypt "circle" Not to be confused by those other two art lovers, Y E and O W, who have been ascending you with miserable morbid music from their reeking record racks, I have recently obtained a collection of folk songs from some dead folk! Later on while I pound a few pieces on my pulsating piano I'll start my soul melody with that old favorite, "On Top of Old Smokey" . . . wind my weird way through "The Lost Greenaway," and for my last offering I'll give you with my roiled condition of the latest-time mode popular by Country Stars, "Ghost Train"! But while my loud ferble fingers are tickling the ivories, let an obscure mere earthly thing!

First of all, the noted Car "Queen-of-the-Inner" retrospective . . . **THE FRIENDLY GRAVE-DIGGERS AND MONUMENT CHISELERS (WE WRAP 'EM, TIE 'EM TAG TIE) CLAMMING AND SHOP-LIFTING ASSOCIATION OF CREAMSTONE, MAINE . . .** have just dug up the heaviest one possible! First place goes to Douglas Jack Davis (MY BOY!), for his bloody **CIRCLES FOR MORMON**! Second place is taken by George Joe Orlando, for his shooting **ROTTIN' TACKLE**! To Gladys Graham goes the third place because . . . for his cowardly **EDDIE FOR A SPIDER**! Ervey Jack Brown wins fourth spot with his breathtaking **BOARD TO DEATH!** The last, **WESTWOLF**, leads in fifth.

And now a message from my idiot editor! They have instructed me to inform you authors who have written in that EACH of your letters has been carefully read, and the contents as well as compliments given, read, digested, and in most cases acted upon! They have asked me to sincerely thank all of you who have written! Their only regret is that they had it impossible to answer each and every letter personally, so they would like as much to do! (The above statements constitute a paid political advertisement! The opinions expressed in these statements are not necessarily those of your columnist! In fact, I don't give a cop's eye! (They if you write so well! "Come I'm not in the habit of being this ridiculous and and human indignation to meet your words, vulgar terms! How let's not get HASTY, old boy! These words constitute your **HEAD and BLOOD!** That wish is our command!—Ed! So don't say of them with you are serious should drop dead! (Aww, stop leaving your toothless gums and tell me about your **Intimist!**—Ed! Oh, yeah! As I'm sure you're informed, there has been a change of conditions in the world making use of my EC title words such as **TERROR, HORROR, FEAR, and WORD!** While it's true that EC was the first to use these words . . . along with **HAUNT, CRYPT, and VAULT . . .** in the comic mag field, these words cannot be registered! Any old slob can come along and use these words as long as he doesn't use them in the same combination that EC has used them in the title! That this has caused much confusion among you newer readers who have yet to learn to recognize an EC mag by its format and words to laugh! The topic came when I was informed that some publisher had put out a book called "Telling Terror" the title of our column! Worthless to say, I jumped down my little editor, George . . . and they in turn jumped down the rival publisher's

street . . . and the name will be changed! As for us three other titles that come equally close to EC's are concerned, all I can do is to ask you to open your blood-shot eyes, try and not claver, and look for the EC seal . . . the errors are plastered with 'em! So get smart, kiddies . . . was up! (Aww, shabby! You're a real good 31-Eater!) So stop relating my twisted tale!

And now for some mail . . . a letter from there is left for it!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

. . . I notice that you always use the expression, "kiddies"! That I don't like because although I am only 14 myself, I'm sure that many adults read your mag. And I don't think of myself as a "kiddie" either!

Robert Rattle
Box 240, Austin, Texas

Well, old man, when you're as old as I am even an adult is a "kiddie"! But when I call you "kiddie" it's really a form of endearment . . . no slight on your age is intended whether you be 5 or 50! But if enough of you kiddies write in and complain, I'll not be such! (Awww, you're a coward!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

My father is a barber, and now he only lets your magazine in the room to let shop! When the customers read them, they have stood on and and it makes my old man a job easier!

Eddie Fenton
Loring City, N. J.

Lazy bankers hardly care!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

The store keeper where I get your mag keeps a copy hidden for me so I'm sure of getting it!

Robert Jester
Greenwood, Del.

Never can tell when the store might be hit hard, indeed! Why don't you make doubly sure of getting every copy by subscribing . . . The let me hear's supply . . . at convenient times!

And sets of pictures of the Three Ghost-Circles are still for . . . might as well not wait any longer to order . . . the price isn't going down . . . and this offer is limited! It will expire in 1967! And remember . . . only 120 sets to a customer (each at a quarter of a cent!) No wholesale prices!

The address for mail, picture orders, subscriptions, and inserts is:

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 705, Dept. 30
225 Lafayette Street
N. Y. C. 11, N. Y.

**THIS LITTLE GEM OF BLACK
HORROR IS CALLED...**

*Gruntie, it's
Coal-Inside!*



TOBY BROOK HIS SEVEN-YEAR-OLD HEAD ANGRILY!
THE VOICE CONTINUED! IT GRATED IN TOBY'S EARS!
THIS TIME IT WAS HIGH-PITCHED AND EXCITED! IT
WAS ALWAYS DIFFERENT! LAST TIME IT'D BEEN
LOW AND SOFT! THE TIME BEFORE THAT, IT'D BEEN
LOUD AND BRUFF...

SO ON, TOBY! YOUR AUNT'S NOT
NONE NOW! IT'S A GOOD CHANCE!
YOU NEED A FEW PIECES ANYWAY!
SO AHEAD! SO ON DOWN!

NO? AUNT
AUNTS FORKED
ME'S MISTY?
AUNT AUNTS
SAID.



THEY'LL NEVER KNOW,
TOBY! NOW ARE YOU
GOING TO BE ABLE
TO WALK UP THE
SIDEWALK WITHOUT
A HUNK OF COAL?
JUST ONE PIECE...
ONE SMALL PIECE!

SEE, I DO NEED IT
BADLY! TODAY'S THE
GAME! I GOTTA KEEP
SCORE! GRAY! I'LL
DO IT! I'LL GO DOWN
INTO THE COAL-BAY!



TOMY OPENED THE DOOR IN THE KITCHEN THAT LED TO THE CELLAR AND TIPTOED DOWN THE STEPS. HE HESITATED AT THE BOTTOM, PEERING THROUGH THE BLOOM AT THE BOARD-PARTITION NEXT TO THE FURNACE THAT SECTORED OFF THE COAL-BIN FROM THE REST OF THE CELLAR.

OVERHEAD, A BOARD CRACKED! TOMY STOPPED BESIDE THE COAL-BIN DOOR, LOOKING UP...

MAYBE... MAYBE? **NO!** SHE **WOULDN'T** HAVE COME TO THE STORE AND BACK SO FAST!

TOMY LISTENED FOR A MOMENT. THERE WAS NO SOUND! HE SHUNK OPEN THE COAL-BIN DOOR AND STEPPED IN... DATED THE BLACK DUST-COVERED FLOOR...

SEE! THE COAL'S **DON'T MOVE** ALMOST ALL USED! SHE **WILL!** UP! AUNT AGNES! **DUCK!** GRAB! OUGHT TO ORDER! A FEW POUNDS! **MORE!**



BEET LAST TIME AUNT AGNES SAVE ME A GOOD LICKIN'!

LAST TIME YOU GOT CAUGHT? NOT THIS TIME, TOMMY!



A FAINT LIGHT FILTERED THROUGH THE BLEAKENED CELLAR WINDOW HIGH UP IN THE WALL OF THE COAL BIN. TOMY KNELT AND PICKED UP THREE OF THE LARGEST LUMPS HE COULD SEE...

NOT! THESE ARE **ROCK** CHEST!

GRAT! NOW, UMUM, LET'S GET UPSTAIRS BEFORE SHE COMES BACK!



TOMY WENT OUT OF THE COAL-BIN... CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, AND TIPTOED UPSTAIRS. JUST AS HE CAME THROUGH THE CELLAR DOOR INTO THE KITCHEN, THE FRONT DOOR SLAMMED!

GOLLY! AUNT AGNES...

TOMMY! I'M HOME! ARE YOU AROUND? COME HELP ME WITH THESE BUNDLES!



TOMY'S FIRST URGE WAS TO RUN AWAY. BUT BEFORE HE COULD MAKE A MOVE, HIS AUNT WAS IN THE KITCHEN BLARING DOWN AT HIM...



TOMMY! DIDN'T YOU HEAR WE CALL YOU TO HELP ME WITH THESE BUNDLES?

E. I'M SORRY AUNT AGNES! HERE'SIVE ME ONE!

TOMY EXTENDED TWO BLEAKENED, COAL-DUST COVERED HANDS! HIS AUNT CASPED! HER FACE GREW PURPLE WITH RAGE!

TOMMY! YOU'VE BEEN IN THE COAL-BIN AGAIN!

NOO! WHO, ME?



ALUNT BAKES SLAMMED THE BUNDLES DOWN ON THE KITCHEN TABLE.

LOOK AT YOU! YOU'RE FILTHY! I TOLD YOU WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU WENT DOWN THERE AGAIN!

SEE, ALUNT BAKES! I ACCUSED A PIDGE TO KEEP SCORE! THERE'S A GAME THIS AFTERNOON! THE VOICE REMINDED ME!

ARE YOU GOING TO START TELLING ME ABOUT THAT STUPID VOICE YOU KEEP HEARING? YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER - A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING LIAR!

I'M NOT A LIAR! I HEAR A VOICE! HONEST! IT TALKS TO ME. IT MAKES ME DO THINGS!



LIAR! LIAR! YOU'RE JUST BAD. THAT'S ALL! AND GOOD LIKE YOUR FATHER! OH, I WISHED MY SISTER HAD TO MARRY YOU!

STOP IT! STOP TALKING LIKE THAT! MY DADDY WAS WONDERFUL!

MAN! HE WAS A WORTHLESS DRUNKARD! IF IT WASN'T FOR HIM, YOUR MOTHER'D BE ALIVE TODAY!

HE WASN'T A DRUNKARD! HE WASN'T!

NO? HOW DO YOU THINK HE AND YOUR MOTHER WERE KILLED? HE WAS DEAD-DRUNK WHEN HE DROVE HOME THAT NIGHT!

NO! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!



HE USED TO HEAR VOICES. TOO! VOICES, MAN! THEY WERE THE D.F.S. HE CAUSED NOTHING BUT TROUBLE FOR ALL OF US! LOOK AT ME! NOW, I'M STUCK WITH YOU!

THE VOICE SAYS YOU HATE ME. THAT'S WHY YOU'RE ALWAYS FELLING AT ME!

I TELL AT YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE BAD! NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME, YOUR MAN! THE NEXT TIME YOU GO DOWN INTO THAT COAL-BIN, I'LL SEND YOU AWAY TO THE CUPPAW HOME!

NO, ALUNT BAKES! PLEASE DON'T SEND ME AWAY! PLEASE! I'LL BE GOOD! I'LL BE GOOD!





YOU PROMISE?

I PROMISE! NEXT TIME THE VOICE TELLS ME ANYTHING, I WON'T LISTEN! HONEST! I PROMISE... CROSS MY HEART



ALL RIGHT! NOW, GO TO YOUR ROOM! YOU'LL SPEND THE REST OF THE AFTER-NOON MIDDING! YOU'VE GOT TO BE PUNISHED FOR DISOBEYING ME!

I, YES, AUNTIE SIGNED!



TOBY STARTED OFF! HIS AUNT EXPLODED.

YOU'VE GONE TO THE FLOOR! YOUR SHOES ARE COVERED WITH GOAL-DUST! TAKE THEM OFF!

YES - AUNTIE SIGNED!



TOBY UNLACED HIS SHOES AND TROTTERED OFF! HIS AUNT BLAZED AT HIM

IDIOTIC CHILD! VOICES... MUMMUM! IF HE WENT BY SISTER'S FLESH AND BLOOD, I'D HAVE HIM COMMITTED TO AN INSANE ASYLUM! FOUR TIMES HE'S GONE TO THAT GOAL-BAY! WELL, I'M GONE TO PUT A STOP TO THAT!



AUNT ANNE'S THOUGHTS THROUGH THE PHONE BOOK, FOUND WHAT SHE WAS LOOKING FOR, AND CALLED A NUMBER.

HELLO IS THIS MR. KIRSTER, THE LOCKSMITH? OH, GOOD! I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU, MR. KIRSTER! I WANT YOU TO INSTALL A LOCK ON MY GOAL-BAY!



MEANWHILE UPSTAIRS TOBY WAS HAVING HIS TROUBLES

C'MON, TOBY! IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR THE GAME! THE KIDS ARE WAITING FOR YOU! BESIDES, YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP SCORE! THE GOAL... IT'S IN YOUR POCKET!

GO AWAY! I'M NOT GOING TO LISTEN TO YOU!



THE VOICE WAS SOFTLE THE TIME "PLEASE!" IT REMINDS TOBY OF HIS MOTHER'S VOICE - AT LEAST THE LITTLE THAT HE COULD REMEMBER.

IT'S JACK TOBY! JUST CLIMB DOWN THE TRAILLS OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW! HERE! I'LL GO FIRST! YOU FOLLOW!

NO! YOU'RE ONLY TRYING TO GET ME INTO TROUBLE!

THE VOICE WAS OUTSIDE THE WINDOW NOW! IT DRIFTED BACK TO TOBY FROM HALF-WAY DOWN TO THE GROUND...

"NOW! IT'S GEEF! IT LOOKS EARLY!"



TOBY SLIPPED ONE FOOT OVER THE WINDOW SILL... THEN THE OTHER! HE STARTED DOWN THE MULLIER! SUDDENLY A TRUCK PULLED UP BEFORE THE HOUSE...

"GOLLY! A TRUCK! THE DRIVER SEES ME!"

"HEY, BOY! YOU'LL BET HURRY!"



TOBY DROPPED TO THE GROUND AS AUNT ARNIE EXPLODED THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR...

"I'M THE LOCKSMITH. MA'AM! I SAW HIM AS HE DROVE UP!"

"TOBY! BET IN THE HOUSE! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU LATER!"



TOBY SCRAMBLED INTO THE HOUSE AND UP TO HIS ROOM! AUNT ARNIE TOOK THE LOCKSMITH INTO THE CELLAR...

"ORAY, MA'AM! I GOT YUH! YOU WANT A LOCK ON 'ER SO THE KID CAN'T OPEN IT, ENT ONE THAT OPENS WITH A KEF?"

"THAT'S IT! AND... OH, DEAR! I'D BETTER ORDER SOME MORE COAL!"



WHILE THE LOCKSMITH BUSIED HIMSELF ON THE COAL BIN DOOR, AUNT ARNIE FINISHED THE COAL COMPANY...

"THERE'S A LOT OF COAL FOR ONE DELIVERER, MA'AM!"

"I SAID FOUR TONS AND THAT'S WHAT I WANT! WE HAVE A BIG COAL BIN! I ALWAYS ORDER FOUR TONS AT A TIME!"



OF COURSE, TOBY WAS PUNISHED FOR BREAKING OUT OF THE WINDOW, BUT HE PROMISED ONCE MORE THAT HE'D IGNORE THE VOICE FROM THEN ON! THE NEXT DAY...

"NOW YOU'RE TO STAY IN YOUR ROOM WHILE I'M AT THE STORE! IF THE COAL SHOULD COME, JUST TELL THEM TO PUT IT IN THROUGH THE CELLAR WINDOW! AND DON'T FORGET WHAT YOU PROMISED LAST NIGHT!"

"DON'T WORRY, AUNTY ARNIE! I'VE MEMOR SOMETHING TO LISTEN TO THE VOICE AGAIN!"



A LITTLE LATER, TOBY LOOKED UP FROM HIS TOWER! SOMEONE WAS CALLING HIM!

"TOBY! TOBY, HELP ME! COME DOWNSTAIRS PLEASE!"

"HUN? WHY IS AUNT ARNIE CALLING ME?"



TOBY THIPPED DOWNSTAIRS! THE VOICE WAS COMING FROM THE CELLAR.

IS... IS THAT YOU, AUNTIE AGNES?

YES, TOBY! COME DOWN! PLEASE! LET ME OUT OF THE COAL-BIN!



THE COAL-BIN?

YES! THE DOOR LOCKED SHUT ON ME! I CAME IN TO SEE IF THE WOOD-DOP WAS OPEN SO THEY COULD DELIVER THE COAL! AURRY! THEY'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE!



AW, NO! I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET ME INTO ANYMORE TROUBLE!

TOBY! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! COME DOWN HERE AND LET ME OUT! THE KEY IS IN THE LOCK! JUST TURN IT! PLEASE! QUICKLY!



I PROMISED I WOULDN'T LISTEN TO YOU ANYMORE AND I WON'T! YOU JUST SOUND LIKE AUNTIE AGNES! YESTERDAY YOU TRIED TO SOUND LIKE MY MOMMY.

TOBY! I AM YOUR AUNTIE AGNES! PLEASE COME DOWN! PLEASE!



WAS MY DADDY A DRUNKARD, AUNTIE AGNES?

NO, TOBY! YOUR DADDY WAS A GOOD MAN! YOU PLEASE COME DOWN.



SEE? YOU'RE NOT MY AUNTIE AGNES! LORD! THE ALWAYS SAID DADDY WAS A DRUNKARD!



THE SHRIEL SCREAMS OF DELIGHT FROM THE CHILDREN BANGING AROUND THE COAL TRUCK AND THE DEAFENING ROAR AS THE BLACK FUEL CASCADED DOWN THE TIN SLIDE DROWNED OUT AUNT AGNES'S SHRIES OF TERROR! LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE HYDRAULIC-LIFTS RAISED THE TRUCK-BODY UNTIL FOUR TONS OF COAL HAD POURED INTO THE COAL-BIN BEYOND THE TINY CELLAR WINDOW! FOUR TONS ENOUGH TO CRUSH THE STRONGEST OF MEN AS LONG AS A FRAIL, BETTER OLD MAN.



NOW DOESN'T THAT STORY LEAVE YOU WITH A LUMP IN YOUR THROAT? HEH! IT DID OLD JAMES! IN FACT THEY FOUND ONE IN HER THROAT AND TWO MORE IN HER MOUTH WHEN THEY FINALLY DUG HER OUT! LUMPS OF COAL, THAT IS! AS FOR TOBY... WELL, HE DOESN'T HEAR VOICES ANYMORE! NOW, IT'S A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA! THEY SAY THE BOYS GOT A GREAT FUTURE... WRITING THE MUSIC TO THOSE SINGING COMMERCIALS! NOW CAN A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD WRITE MUSIC TO A SINGING COMMERCIAL? COME, COME, NOW! DON'T TELL ME YOU NEVER HEARD ONE! HEH, HEH! BUT



IF THEY HAVEN'T DRIVEN YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND, MY SET ACTUAL PHOTO WILL READ MY COLUMN, THE GRIFF-KEEPER'S CORNER, FOR ALL THE INFO!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HELLO! SO I GOTTA WIND UP THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAD-MAD HAIR, EH? YOU KNOW WHY THEY GIVE ME THIS SPOT? 'CAUSE I'M THE MOST HORRIBLE! DON'T WORRY! MY IDIOT EDITORS KNOW A BAD THING! YEP, IT'S THE OLD WITCH MISTRESS OF THE MOUNT OF FEAR! THE FORE IS LIT UNDER MY FOOT-KNOW-WHAT, AND I'M READY TO DISH OUT ANOTHER OF MY PUTRID-PORTIONS OF PULSATING PLEASANTRIES! THIS LITTLE LADLE OF LURID LOATHSOMENESS WILL DEFINITELY WHET YOUR APPETITE! I CALL IT...GEM...

**NOURNIN,
AMBROSE...**



ANDREW GEMMET PUSHED OPEN THE HUGE IRON GATE OF HIS UNCLE'S WAST ESTATE AND MOVED UP THE TREE-LINED ROAD TOWARD THE PALACIAL HOUSE THAT LOOMED UP BEFORE HIM IN THE SEMI-DARKNESS.

SO THIS IS HAWLEY

MANOR? I KNEW THAT UNCLE AMBROSE WAS WEALTHY, BUT I NEVER EXPECTED THIS! I WONDER WHY THEY'VE BECOME RECOLLECTED... HE AND AUNT ELBA! OH, WELL! I'LL GET ALL THE DOPE EVENTUALLY...



ANDREW STEPPED ONTO THE PORCH OF THE IMPRESSIVE MAN-SION AND LIFTED THE HEAVY BRASS KNOCKER THAT ADORNED THE MASSIVE OAK FRONT-DOOR. THE HOLLOW BOOM ECHOED AND HE EDGED WITHIN.

OH! THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS! HOW ANYONE COULD STAY HERE FOR THREE YEARS WITHOUT LEAVING IT BEATS ME!

AS THE DIN OF THE DOOR-KNOCKER DIED AWAY, SLOW FOOTSTEPS APPROACHED. THE HUGE DOOR SWUNG OPEN AND A WIZENED WRINKLED FACE PEERED OUT.

Y-YES?

ARE...ARE YOU MY UNCLE AMBROSE? AMBROSE HARLEY!

THE OLD MAN'S AGED FACE LIT UP AND A SMILE SPREAD ACROSS IT. HE STEPPED BACK PERMITTING ANDREW TO ENTER.

THAT'S ME! COME IN! YOU MUST BE RIGHT, OH! AMBROSE, MY WIFE'S SISTERS BOY! I'VE BEEN SO ANNOYED TO MEET YOU AND AUNT ELSA...

THE OLD MAN CLOSED THE DOOR AND LOOKED AROUND NERVOUSLY. THEN HE MOVED CLOSE TO ANDREW.

DON'T, DON'T BE TOO DISAPPOINTED WITH AUNT ELSA, S'BOY! SHE... SHE... SHE'S WELL!

OH! I'M SORRY TO HEAR IT! WHAT'S WRONG?

THE OLD MAN CONTINUED TO PEER FROM SIDE TO SIDE. THEN, HE TAPPED HIS TEMPLE.

SHE... SHE'S NOT WELL... HERE! EVER SINCE THE FIRST DEATH...

THE FIRST DEATH?

OF COURSE! YOU COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN! IT HAPPENED THREE YEARS AGO! ONE OF YOUR DEPART COUSINS CAME TO STAY WITH US! LOVELY WOMAN! SHE... SHE DIED... IN HER SLEEP!

NO! I... I DON'T KNOW! BUT YOU SAID THAT WAS THE FIRST! WERE THERE OTHERS?

TWO OTHERS! MY AUNT BROTHER CAME TO STAY WITH US ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO! HE... HE WAS OLDER THAN I! HE PASSED AWAY ABOUT A MONTH LATER! THEN MY WIFE'S NEECE CAME! IT WAS TRAGIC! SUCH A YOUNG GIRL...

YOU... YOU'D BETTER TELL ME ABOUT AUNT ELSA, UNCLE! IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD KNOW?





YOU HEAR SHE'S CRAZY?



I I SEE?



A PAUL, THIN, WEE-EYED OLD WOMAN TOTTERED INTO THE LIBRARY WHERE ANDREW AND AMBROSE WERE TALKING! SHE STARED AT AMBROSE.

WHO'S HE? WHAT'S HE GOING HERE?

THIS IS ANDREW MANLEY, MY DEAR! I WROTE TO HIM INVITING HIM TO STAY WITH US!

ANDREW? STELLA, MY SISTER'S... BOY? HAS IT COME TO THAT?

I I DON'T UNDERSTAND, UNCLE AMBROSE! WHAT DOES SHE MEAN?

NOTHING, MY BOY! NOTHING! YOU SEE... YOU ARE OUR ONLY LIVING NEAR, NOW!

THE OTHERS ARE DEAD! ALL DEAD! THREE OF THEM ARE OUT THERE IN THE HANGOVER!



PLEASE, ELBA! LET'S TALK ABOUT MORE PLEASANT THINGS!

THIS IS A WONDERFUL LIBRARY, UNCLE AMBROSE! YOU HAVE SO MANY BOOKS!

YES! THOU-SANDS OF THEM! DO YOU READ, ANDREW?

A LITTLE, MUM! ELBA! A LITTLE.

EVEN READ 'MAGNETS'. ANDREW? WHERE IT SAYS 'MURDER WILL OUT'!

ELBA! COME, ANDREW! I WILL SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM!



ELSA STARED AT ANDREW, AS HE PASSEDBY AND FOLLOWED AMBROSE UP THE MARBLE STAIRS TO THE SECOND FLOOR! THEY STOPPED BEFORE A DOOR AT THE END OF A LONG HALL.

I HOPE YOU WILL BE COMFORTABLE IN HERE, ANDREW!

I'M SURE I WILL BE, UNCLE AMBROSE!

ANDREW'S BEDROOM WAS LARGE AND LAVISHLY FURNISHED WITH EXPENSIVE ANTIQUES! A STONE FIREPLACE COVERED ONE WALL OF THE ROOM! ANDREW TOUCHED A MATCH TO THE WOOD PILED ON THE ANDERSONS, AND SOON THE FIRE'S CHERRY GLOP DANCED ACROSS THE FLOOR! SUDDENLY...

WHO... WHO'S THERE?

IT'S ME... ANDREW! YOUR AUNT ELSA!

THE OLD WOMAN STARED AT ANDREW FROM THE PARTLY OPENED DOOR...

OH! COME IN, AUNT ELSA! SIT DOWN!

I... I'VE COME TO REASSURE YOU, ANDREW!

WARN ME, AUNT ELSA!

GET OUT, ANDREW! GET OUT OF THIS HOUSE AND NEVER COME BACK! HE'S A FIEND, A HORRIBLE FIEND!

YOU MEAN UNCLE AMBROSE?

YES! I MUSTN'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN! IT'S HORRIBLE HORRIBLE! HE... HE'S A...

ELSA!

AMBROSE STOOD FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY, HIS WRINKLED FACE PURPLE WITH ANGER! HE SHARPEL AT THE OLD WOMAN.

ELSA! GET TO BED... THIS MINUTE!

Y-YES, AMBROSE! I... I'M GOING!

THE OLD WOMAN LOOKED AT ANDREW, HER EYES PLEADING, AS SHE SHUFFLED OFF...

W-HEN-BECK, ANDREW! MURDER WILL OUT!

HURRY ON, YES, AUNT ELSA!

GOOD-NIGHT, ANDREW! COME, MY DEAR!

THE NEXT MORNING ANDREW WAS AWAKENED BY A FRANTIC POUNDING ON HIS BEDROOM DOOR...

ANDREW? WAKE UP!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
IT'S AUNT
ELSA! SHE'S...



WHAT IS IT, SON?
WHAT'S HAPPENED?

ELSA! SHE'S... SON...
SON... SHE'S
DEAD!



WELL, THE PLOT THICKENS,
EH, SIDDERS? WELL, THE SOB
CAME AND PROCLAIMED OLD
ELSA DEAD OF NATURAL CAUSES!
ANDREW'S UNCLE WAS PRETTY
BROKER UP OVER ELSA'S DEATH!
THE FUNERAL WAS DIGNIFIED
AND SHORT! THEY CARRIED THE
OLD GAL OUT TO THE FAMILY
MAUSOLEUM... AND THAT WAS
THAT...



ONE EVENING, A FEW DAYS AFTER
ELSA'S ENTOMBMENT...



WHAT'S THAT?
LOOKS LIKE A FLOWER
DOWN THERE... GOING
TOWARD THE MAUSOLEUM!
WHY, IT'S
UNCLE AMBROSE!
AND HE'S CARRYING
FLOWERS!

EVENING AFTER EVENING, AMBROSE
WOULD LEAVE THE HOUSE AND GO
DOWN TO THE FAMILY MAUSOLEUM
TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH HIS
DEAR DEPARTED ELSA...



POOR OLD SOB!
HE REALLY
MISSES HER!

THEN, ONE EVENING, ANDREW WAS BROWSING AROUND
THE LIBRARY LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO READ. A
TITLE CAUGHT HIS EYE! 'MURDER!' HE COULD
ALMOST HEAR AUNT ELSA'S VOICE...



EVER READ
'MURDER', ANDREW?
WHERE IT SAYS
'MURDER WILL OUT'?

ANDREW REACHED UP AND PULLED DOWN THE BOOK.
HE OPENED IT...



WHY... WHY THIS ISN'T 'MURDER' AT
ALL! IT'S A DIARY! AUNT ELSA'S
DIARY!

HEL, HEL 'YEP' THERE IT WAS! HIDDEN BETWEEN THE LEATHER-BOUND COVERS OF 'MACARTHUR'S' AUNT ELSA'S DIARY! ANDREW READ IT! EVERY PART! ELSA'S WORDS WERE VALUABLE... BUT SOME ENTRIES MADE SENSE...

...AND THIS ONE, INSPECTOR LISTEN! I KNOW NOW HOW HE MURDERED THEM! SUFFOCATION! HE DROPPED THEM SO THEY COULDN'T RESIST... THEN SMOOTHERED THEM WITH 'A PILLON' BUT, WHY? WHY?

...AND THIS ONE! NOW I KNOW WHY! IT MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN! I MUST NOT LET IT! AND THE LAST ENTRY! ANDREW HAS COME! HE'LL REPEAT! I MUST WARN HIM! THE PERO WILL DO TO HIM WHAT HE HAS DONE TO THE STINE! IF AMBROSE WERE TO FIND OUT THAT I MEAN TO TELL ANDREW EVERYTHING, HE WOULD KILL ME!



WHEN? AND YOU SAY AMBROSE CAME IN THAT NIGHT AND INTERRUPTED ELSA? JUST AS SHE WAS ABOUT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING?

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR! BUT ONE THING PUZZLES ME! IF AMBROSE MURDERED ELSA, WHY DOES HE STAY HERE?

IF HE MURDERED HER? WHY THE DOG FELT IT WAS A NATURAL DEATH!

SUFFOCATION LOOKS LIKE A NATURAL DEATH!

THE ONLY WAY TO PROVE THIS ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, MR. DEWITT, IS TO GET PERMISSION TO EXAMINE THE BODY AND PERFORM AN AUTOPSY!



PROMISING NOT TO REVEAL THAT ANDREW HAD TYPED THEM OFF, TWO DETECTIVES CAME TO SEE AMBROSE HAWLEY...

AMBROSE'S ASID BODY SHOW AS HE ROBBED A TEAR TRICKLED DOWN HIS SWOLEN CHEEK...

EXCUSE MY LATE WIFE'S BODY! PERFORM AN AUTOPSY ON HER! NEVER! NEVER!

IF YOU REFUSE, MR. HAWLEY, WE CAN GET A COURT ORDER GIVING US PERMISSION TO DO IT OVER YOUR OBJECTIONS!

PLEASE! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO DISTURB HER! SHE'S BEEN LAID TO REST! LEAVE HER... I SEE YOUR SON... SON... LEAVE HIM BE!

LET'S GO, RICKY! KELLY! RICKY! KELLY!



THE TWO DETECTIVES LEFT THE SCREAMING OLD MAN! ANDREW STOPPED THEM AT THE DOOR.



WHAT HAPPENED?
HE REFUSED!
KEEP YOUR EYE ON HIM, GEMERT!

LATER THAT EVENING, ANDREW MARCHED FROM HIS WIN "M AS OLD AMBROSE CROSSED THE GARDEN TO THE FAMILY MAUSOLEUM.



IT'S BETTER FOLLOW HIM THIS TIME! HE MIGHT TRY TO HIDE THE BODY!

AFTER THE OLD MAN ENTERED THE CRYPT, ANDREW WENT DOWNSTAIRS AND ACROSS THE GARDEN! THE DOOR TO THE MAUSOLEUM WAS HEAVILY OPEN! ANDREW, SEEMED IN



GO! D LORD!

A WAVE OF NAUSEA AND REVULSION SWEEP OVER ANDREW! HE TURNED AWAY FROM THE HORRIBLE SIGHT AND RAN TOWARD THE HOUSE! FINALLY, HE COULD



GEMERT! THAT FOOT! WHAT'S WRONG?
HE'S SHAKING!
WHERE'S YOUR GUN, GEMERT?

THE DETECTIVES HURRIED TO THE MAUSOLEUM AND FLUNG THE DOOR OPEN! AMBROSE HADLEY SPUN AROUND FROM THE PARTIALLY EATEN CORPSE OF HIS LATE WIFE AND OTHER BURIED AND PROTRUDING MOUTH DROOLING, AT THE INTRUDERS.



WHAT YOU WERE RIGHT, INSPECTOR! HE... HE IS A SHODD!

THEY DRAGGED THE SHRIEKING, CLAWING OLD MAN FROM HIS VICTIM AND TOOK HIM AWAY! LATER THEY RETURNED TO THE CRYPT AND EXAMINED THE OTHER COFFINS.



DO YOU SEE, GEMERT? WHEN WE TOOK OUT FROM THE UNDERGROUND IN TOWN THAT HADLEY REFUSED TO ALLOW HIM TO EMBALM THE BODIES, HE KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG! THE OTHER COFFINS HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF THEIR FLESH, TOO!

THAT'S WHY HE INVITED YOU HERE... TO HADLEY MANOR! LIKE THE OTHERS, HE INTENDED YOU TO BE ONE OF HIS MEAL-TICKETS!

YEE, YEE! LUCKY THEY ~~CAUGHT~~ UP WITH OLD AMBROSE WHEN THEY DID! HE WAS RUNNING OUT OF RELATIVES! THANKS TO OLD ELZA WHO WAS FED UP WITH THE WHOLE AFFAIR, ANDREW WAS SAVED FROM A VERY DISTASTEFUL EXPERIENCE! AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE SAVED FROM A DISTASTEFUL EXPERIENCE, DON'T

SEND FOR MY PHOTO! THE METHOD FOR OBTAINING IT CAN BE FOUND IN THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GORMER... FOR YOU FRIENDS WHO LIKE THAT SORT OF STUFF! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU REST IN THE VAULT OF HORROR! TILL THEN, SHODD-BYE AND UNPLEASANT DREAMS!

IN ALL THY WAYS - ACKNOWLEDGE HIM



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TALES

FROM THE

CRYPT

200
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FEATURING...



THE WITCH



THE WITCH



THE WITCH



WELL I ASKED FOR YOUR LETTERS AND COMMENTS ON THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE EXTRA-LARGE VERSION OF MY WILDY MAGAZINE, AND I HAVE DID ANSWER HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE MANY LETTERS I GOT AND YOU ARE HOLDING THE RESULT IN YOUR HANDS I HAVE DRIVEN BACK DOWN TO NORMAL SIZE ON WELL. THE STRIP ON FELT GREAT AND MY EDITOR TELL ME THAT I MIGHT GET TO OCCASIONALLY APPEAR IN THE LARGER FORMAT KEEP THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING



WRITE TO:
RUSS COCHRAN
PO BOX 486
WHEAT PLAINS
MO 65775

Dear Mr Cochran

I must be crazy I just flew three hours to get a copy of the EXTRA LARGE TALES FROM THE CRYPT Top and my one that I read that I had

I only had one problem with the EXTRA LARGE COMIC it was on the big that it was damaged on the flight back How can I protect the precious copy?

Your friend till your
deathly one
Kevin Mathall
Nashville, TN

Dear Russ

I taken a bit to get me to write it but this old is (Oh my...) was your post but the felt doesn't well I about being able to see the wonderful artwork better but my eyes are good and the touch is great For those of us who collect comics regularly and big and see that really this tremendous size makes it very difficult on our shelves regarding checks I like TALES FROM THE CRYPT VAULT OF HORROR and VAULT OF FEAR and up until now watched them up to point as they came out Please give I need up a good thing go back to your regular size Thanks for listening

Get Kelley
Olympia, WA

Dear Russ

I am a 22 year old Sociology major at the Univ. of California at Santa Cruz. I have been reading and collecting comics since I was about 7 or 8 years old. I am writing to let you know that I for one am in support of the larger size. I did not even recognize the comic at first because of the size change. The comic dealer at Atlantic Cityworlds had to point it out to me. I am glad he did because I would have totally missed it. Other than the surprise of the size change, I like what you are doing. I know this won't be published because it is not full of horrible puns like the letters that are usually published, but I thought I would write anyway. Thanks again for bringing back the vintage EC comics at a reasonable price.

Darin Thoms
Santa Cruz, CA

Dear Russ

I have just finished looking through the Post issue (TC) of your EXTRA LARGE COMICS and I have to admit you have simply delighted me and hopefully many others, who will love seeing the old EC stories in a larger format. Reading this comic was a treat for my tired old eyes.

When you first brought this idea to me, I thought you were out of your mind because I was afraid retailers would not want to handle comics other than "normal" size, but after seeing your first issue, I am convinced that you are on to something (By the way, what's my royalty check?)

Many of my favorite memories are from the years in the early 1960's when Al and I were turning out these EC stories, and your new comics make the EC artwork look better than ever.

Congratulations on yet another job well done!

Love and respect
Bill Gaines
New York, NY

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WHAT I WOULDNT
LIKE TO BE ON A
JERRY'S JUMP
MARCH OF THE
SIXTY SEVEN
JANUARY
SIXTY?

WELL, THAT
DEPENDS
ON THE
WAY YOU
DONT WANT A
BOUT-TOWN
SQUAD DONT?

WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?

IT'S ABOUT
THEY THE
COPPER MARCHING
WE'LL TALK TO
THEY THE MARCHING
MARCHING OF THE
MARCHING MARCHING

WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?

THAT YOU, IN
MARCHING AND MORE...
YOU WANT MORE
MARCHING ABOUT
MARCHING TO BE
MARCHING WE DONT?



WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?

WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?

WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?

WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?



WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?

WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?

WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?

WELL, THAT I
WANT JERRY
MARCHING?
JERRY...
MARCHING? SO
DONT?



WHEN THE MAN DOES OUT TO GET THE BARRIL, THE FEET-DRIVING POWER AND "FLUT" INTO THE JAWNS GOES THE UNEXPECTED DEVIL'S MACHINA, HE SAYS!

A JAWN WITH INTEREST!

HE'S NOT WORRIED ABOUT TOLD THE THE BEST PLAN OF ALL-TIME IN THE ENTIRE PLANET!

IN THE CENTER OF THE BARRIL, THE MAN AT POINT (A) MUST FIRST PROVE TO HIMSELF HE'S WORTHY OF THE SUPPORT OF THE WATER BARRILS BY SHOWING THAT HE'S A BARRIL PLATFORM OF ABOUT THE SAME SIZE AS THE ONE I CAN GET!

THEY THE ONLY A JAWN AT THE CENTER OF THE BARRIL, BECAUSE WHEN THE TIME IS APPROX!

I DON'T WANT TO BE A JAWN-UP IN THE BARRIL, BUT YOU SHOULD BECAUSE BEFORE ALL THIS IS IN THE JAWN'S HAND IS THE SUPPORT OF THE PLATFORM!

YOU'VE APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY IN A JAWN? THIS IS SOMETHING FOR YOU TO DO!

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN HAVE THIS MANY FOR US? AS THE ANSWER IS...

OF COURSE, WE CAN!

THEY'VE BEEN TOLD TO GO TO THE BARRIL AND GET THE BARRILS!

HOW TO WORK UP A NEW ENERGY ON THE AREA CAN BE THE BEST WAY!

WHAT'S THE ANSWER? ANY OF THEM? THE BEST WAY!

THE BARRILS ARE STUCK, AND THE ANSWER IS TO GO TO THE END OF THE BARRILS!

HE'S NOT WORRIED IF HE'S NOT WORRIED, AND THE BARRIL HE'LL BE ABLE TO WORK UP WITH THAT PLATFORM!

I DON'T CARE! JUST SHOW ME THE BEST WAY TO WORK UP WITH A JAWN!

WE CAN! THE ANSWER!

SAFELY, THE MEN APPROACH THE ICEBERG.



THE ICEBERG-BEARERS TRY.



AND THE MEN PLUNGE INTO THE WATER.



...AND IT TAKES BUT ONE THE PLANTER BRINGS THE FIRST ONE'S BIRTHDAY CAKE!



I DON'T
WANT TO
REVEAL MY
AGE!

YOU'LL BE
SURPRISED BY
HOW OLD I
AM!

WELL, THAT
YOU JAMES
BASTARD! WE
WANT IT!
IT'S A
CAKE!

THE SECOND ONE FALLS
OUT OF THE FEELER BOARDS
TOWARD THE ICEBERG.

ALL YOU CAN
DO IS
LET IT
GO!

THE FEELER-BOARDS MOVE UP AND
THE MAN COLLAPSES INTO THE WATER.

WELL, THAT'S
THE FIRST ONE'S
BIRTHDAY!

WELL, I DON'T
WANT TO
REVEAL MY
AGE!



THE THREE MEN BECOME EXCITED, AS THE BOAT
MAN BEGINS TO BRING THE PLANTER'S BIRTHDAY CAKE
TOWARD THE ICEBERG. THE MEN WANT TO REVEAL
THEIR AGES TO THE BOAT MAN.

WELL, I DON'T
WANT TO
REVEAL MY
AGE!

WELL, I DON'T
WANT TO
REVEAL MY
AGE!



THE FIRST TO THE BOAT MAN! THE LATTER
WANTS TO REVEAL HIS AGE!

WELL, I DON'T
WANT TO
REVEAL MY
AGE!

WELL, I DON'T
WANT TO
REVEAL MY
AGE!

WELL, I DON'T
WANT TO
REVEAL MY
AGE!





"WHAT THE HELL IS THAT? THE
SMALL ONE AND THE BIG ONE
LOOK THE SAME EXCEPT FOR
THE BRILLIANT TUNE-UP!"

"WHY DON'T YOU
TRY THEM?
BETTER
LOOK BETTER
THAN YOU!"



"IF YOU'RE THE
GUY TO GO FOR
BUYING THE PLATON
I AM NOT INTERESTED
AS THE MAN HAS
FILED HIS RESIGN
OF THE JOB-JOB!"

"I DON'T
KNOW
WHAT
YOU'RE
SAYING
THE MAN
IS GAY
NOW!"



"BUT WHY
WASTING
TIME THAT
WAY? I
WOULDN'T
TALK THE
PLATON
IS ESSENTIAL!"

"SURELY FOR
ENTERTAINMENT
SUPPORTING
IT WOULD BE
A SUCCESSFUL
JOB!"



"HAPPY
CONGRATULATIONS!"

"YOU'RE RIGHT! AFTER
ALL THAT TRAVEL
WE'VE WILL BECOME
SOMEONE IN ORDER
TO BELIEVE IN
OUR LIVES!"

"YOU KNOW
THE PURPOSE
OF THE JOURNAL,
GAYNE!"



"I THINK THAT YOU'RE
SAYING IN ORDER
CONGRATULATIONS WOULD
BECOME YOURS IF THE
GUY WAS INTERESTED!"

"BUT WHY WASTING
TIME, CAPTAIN? YOU
WOULDN'T BE ANYMORE
YOU'RE SUCH AN
ENTERTAINER!"



"A NEW EXHIBITION
WASTING YOUR
ALL CONGRATULATIONS
WASTING!"

"BUT YOU'RE
WASTING YOUR
A BIT OF TIME
TO BECOME A
CITIZEN!"

"GAYNE, WHY
LET'S GO
I'M THE
NUMBER ONE
IN THE CITY!"



"WELL, IF YOU
WANT TO GO
I WANT TO GO
TO WORK!"

"YOU'RE
WASTING
YOUR
TIME!"

"AS IS
THAT'S
ANOTHER
ONE
WASTING!"

IT WAS AGAIN THE NAZI-GARRON BARGE WHICH HAD BEEN A STRONG CLIP! MOUNTAINOUS WAVES LASHED AT THE SHIP, THOUGH IT MOVED. TWO OF ITS THREE LIFEBOATS WERE TORN FROM THEIR MOORINGS AND SOOT.



LOOKING DOWN AT A POOR CREWMAN.

CAPTAIN JEFFERSON
THERE'S A PROBLEM
IN THE AIR! HULL!
WE'RE TAKING ON
WATER!

PROBABLY
BY ACCIDENT
JEFF!

CAPTAIN
WHAT'S GOING
ON? BY CAPTAIN!



WHAT PROBLEM, MR. JEFFERSON? GET INTO YOUR LIFEBOAT! WE WANT FOR THE RESCUE! CAPTAIN!

GOOD
GOD!

WHAAT?
WHAT'S GOING
ON?



THE TWO MEN RAN TOWARDS THE SHIP, INTO THE WATERS OF THE BAY. HULLS WERE CRASHING AND MEN WERE FALLING. THE CAPTAIN, JEFFERSON, WAS TRYING TO HOLD ON.

JEFFERSON!
I'M HERE!
AND YOU ARE
SAFE!

WE'RE ALL
SAFE!
BY JEFF!

WELL,
WELL,
MR. JEFF!



WITH THE OVER-BOARD LIFEBOAT BEARING THE BRITISH FLAG, IT WAS A SIGHT OF A VICTORY.

WELL, WE'RE SAFE!
THERE'S NO MORE
TO BE WORRIED FOR!
WE'VE BEEN
SAVED! JEFFERSON!

CAN'T YOU
STOP FOR
A MINUTE,
MR. JEFFERSON?

IT'S ABOUT
THE BRITISH
FLAG!
TO THE
SHORE!



SO, THEN, A GREAT SIGHT OF THE BRITISH FLAG!

IT'S ABOUT
THE BRITISH
FLAG!
TO THE
SHORE!

WE'VE BEEN
SAVED!
BY JEFFERSON!

THE
BRITISH
FLAG!
TO THE
SHORE!



GREEN REACHED THE LIFEBOOT AFTER A BARRAGE OF SHOTS FROM THE GUNBOAT. HE WAS GLAD TO BE ALIVE.



NO MORE ROOM!
GO AWAY!
NO MORE!

GET DOWN, MY
BOY!

GREEN'S BOAT WAS DOWN ON THE STRAITS OF GARDEN. BENEVOLENT'S BOATLAND WAS AT STAKE!



NO MORE ROOM!
GO AWAY! WE'LL
WE'LL ALL DROWN!

GREEN GRABBED THE BOAT AND RUSHED FORWARD. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS LEFT ALIVE. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS LEFT ALIVE.



A GENTLEMAN
IS ALWAYS A
GENTLEMAN, EN
YOU MURDERER!

IT'S NO DIFFERENCE
IT WAS OUR LIVES
ON JUST ABOUT
THE LINE!

ANYONE WHOSE BOATLAND IS THE LIFEBOOT'S... ANYONE WHOSE BOATLAND IS THE LIFEBOOT'S...



IT'S ENOUGH...

GO AWAY!

THE BOATLAND WAS AS IT STRUCK BLAZING FIRE! GREEN WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS LEFT ALIVE. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS LEFT ALIVE.



AAAAAAAAAAH!

WE'RE GOING
OVER!

THEY'RE ALL DEAD! IT'S
 DEAD! THE ONLY ONE
 WHO'S LEFT IS THE
 ONE WHO'S LEFT!
 THE OTHERS ARE ALL
 DEAD! THE ONLY ONE
 WHO'S LEFT IS THE
 ONE WHO'S LEFT!



BACK IN THE NIGHT, THE
 MEN WHO WERE LEFT
 WERE ALL DEAD!
 THE ONLY ONE WHO'S
 LEFT IS THE ONE WHO'S
 LEFT!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
 YOU'RE HOLDING ME
 BACK!
 I'M TRYING TO GET
 OUT OF HERE!

ALL RIGHT, BUT
 IT WON'T DO
 ANY GOOD TO
 TRY TO GET
 OUT OF HERE
 NOW!



IT'S BETTER
 TO STAY
 HERE!
 YOU'LL BE
 SAFE!

THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
 THE ONLY ONE WHO'S
 LEFT IS THE ONE WHO'S
 LEFT!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
 YOU'RE HOLDING ME
 BACK!
 I'M TRYING TO GET
 OUT OF HERE!

IT'S BETTER TO
 STAY HERE!
 YOU'LL BE SAFE!



IT'S BETTER TO
 STAY HERE!
 YOU'LL BE SAFE!

THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
 THE ONLY ONE WHO'S
 LEFT IS THE ONE WHO'S
 LEFT!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
 YOU'RE HOLDING ME
 BACK!
 I'M TRYING TO GET
 OUT OF HERE!

IT'S BETTER TO
 STAY HERE!
 YOU'LL BE SAFE!

IT'S BETTER TO
 STAY HERE!
 YOU'LL BE SAFE!



IT'S BETTER TO
 STAY HERE!
 YOU'LL BE SAFE!

HE WOULD TRADE ANYTHING WORTHY OF A GIFT RECEIVED WITH MARY, INCLUDING THE \$400,000 CAR. JUST CHANCE WITH JOANNA?

WELL, MARY, HE'S NOT WITH A JOE. HE'S WITH A JOE. IT'S IN THE SPOT. HE'S WITH A JOE. HE'S WITH A JOE.

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WELL, MARY, HE'S NOT WITH A JOE. HE'S WITH A JOE. IT'S IN THE SPOT. HE'S WITH A JOE. HE'S WITH A JOE.

WELL, HE'S RIGHT! THERE'S NO USE IF
 "MONEY" AND "HAPPY" DON'T COME
 DOWN TO MEANS FOR I.E. TALKING
 THE "BROTHERHOOD" PEOPLE AND
 "THEY" ABOUT "BROTHERHOOD"
 PEOPLE IN "BROTHERHOOD" SITUATIONS!
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"

WHY
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"

WELL, HE'S
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"

WELL, HE'S
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"



THEY WANT TO KNOW IF THE BOOK IS AVAILABLE! (MONEY SPEAKS)
 THE "BROTHERHOOD"



SO, WHAT IS THE "BROTHERHOOD" ABOUT?
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"



WELL, HE'S
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"



SO, WHAT IS THE "BROTHERHOOD" ABOUT?
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"



WELL, HE'S
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"
 "THEY" ARE "THEY" AND "THEY"

But it didn't do any good!
Jack's team went down in
front of the machine! We tried
every trick we knew.
What happened? How did
it go wrong?

Get married? Jack wouldn't
get married? He was too
stupid?

Well, he
wants a good
wife, doesn't
he? There
are these
two women.

Don't let the family
know about this!
Use my left
hand into the
right.

Down,
Down



So Jack came back to the office and
he brought home, he was kind of
drunk and changed his job to the
city. He was not the boss of the
company.



What was
going on
there?





YES, FINE. YOU, TOO, CAN BE LUCKY LIKE MARY, HERE! YOU, TOO, CAN COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION OF E.C.'S! YOU, TOO, CAN OWN...

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HEE, HEE! E C'S SCIENCE-FICTION
MAGS MUST BE *PRETTY FIENDISH*
TO GIVE *THESE TWO GHOULS*
A CHARGE! LOOK AT 'EM!



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SCIENCE**

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PAUL LEITCH-CRISP

**WEIRD
FANTASY**

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

WELL, YOU'VE GOT TO BE A BIT OF A WITCH YOURSELF TO FIND THE SPIDER'S EGG! THE WITCH SAID THE GROUP WERE TO GO TO THE CAULDRON AND GET THE SPIDER'S EGG! SHE SAID TO GO TO THE CAULDRON AND GET THE SPIDER'S EGG! SHE SAID TO GO TO THE CAULDRON AND GET THE SPIDER'S EGG! SHE SAID TO GO TO THE CAULDRON AND GET THE SPIDER'S EGG!

BURIED TREASURE!



My little spider is waiting for you! You must be a bit of a witch yourself to find the spider's egg! The witch said to go to the cauldron and get the spider's egg! She said to go to the cauldron and get the spider's egg! She said to go to the cauldron and get the spider's egg!



HEARD, AND AN UNLIT CANDLE HE HUNG FOR HIS
 SLAVE, FROM THE HURDLES BEHIND THE BLACK STALL
 BLINDLY HE WAS A MAN - AN UNLIT CANDLE WHO SHOULD
 ONLY BE BURNED THE MORGUE BY HIS OWN HANDS
 THE CRUEL HANDS OF SLAVES AND OPPRESSORS? THEY
 WOULD LIVE AT HIS BURNING EYES AT THE MORGUE
 AND THEY WOULD LIVE WITH THEIR SLAVES.



"THERE IS A
 CANDLE AT THE
 MORGUE TODAY?"

"NO, MY FRIEND,
 THE CANDLE AND HIS COURT
 STAY THERE!"

THE END, THE FEELING OF THE MORGUE OF
 UNLIT CANDLE WHO SHOULD ONLY BE BURNED
 THE MORGUE BY HIS OWN HANDS
 THE CRUEL HANDS OF SLAVES AND OPPRESSORS?
 THEY WOULD LIVE AT HIS BURNING EYES AT THE MORGUE
 AND THEY WOULD LIVE WITH THEIR SLAVES.



"CALL THE
 ATTENTION!"

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

AND THE SPEECH WAS NOW OVER, LEAVING THE
 MORGUE'S MOUTH OPEN, THE MORGUE'S MOUTH OPEN
 BEHIND HIM, THE MORGUE'S MOUTH OPEN.



"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

AND THE MORGUE'S MOUTH WAS OPEN IN A
 LOOK OF PAIN, A MOUTH WHO SHOULD ONLY BE BURNED
 THE MORGUE BY HIS OWN HANDS
 THE CRUEL HANDS OF SLAVES AND OPPRESSORS?
 THEY WOULD LIVE AT HIS BURNING EYES AT THE MORGUE
 AND THEY WOULD LIVE WITH THEIR SLAVES.



"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"



ONE OF THE MORGUE'S MOUTH WAS OPEN
 IN A LOOK OF PAIN, A MOUTH WHO SHOULD ONLY BE BURNED
 THE MORGUE BY HIS OWN HANDS
 THE CRUEL HANDS OF SLAVES AND OPPRESSORS?
 THEY WOULD LIVE AT HIS BURNING EYES AT THE MORGUE
 AND THEY WOULD LIVE WITH THEIR SLAVES.

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"



AND THE MORGUE'S MOUTH WAS OPEN IN A
 LOOK OF PAIN, A MOUTH WHO SHOULD ONLY BE BURNED
 THE MORGUE BY HIS OWN HANDS
 THE CRUEL HANDS OF SLAVES AND OPPRESSORS?
 THEY WOULD LIVE AT HIS BURNING EYES AT THE MORGUE
 AND THEY WOULD LIVE WITH THEIR SLAVES.

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"



THEY MUST BE MORGUE'S MOUTH WAS OPEN
 IN A LOOK OF PAIN, A MOUTH WHO SHOULD ONLY BE BURNED
 THE MORGUE BY HIS OWN HANDS
 THE CRUEL HANDS OF SLAVES AND OPPRESSORS?
 THEY WOULD LIVE AT HIS BURNING EYES AT THE MORGUE
 AND THEY WOULD LIVE WITH THEIR SLAVES.

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

"WELL, COME
 YOURSELF!"

HEL, HEL! WHO ARE YOU
SPEAKING TO, THOUGH? IN AN
AWFUL LITTLE TOWN LIKE THIS
ALL, THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN
WHO CAN HELP YOU TO MAKE
THE HARBOR SAFE TO MAKE IT
SAFER BY GIVING YOU
HEL, HEL! THAT'S ALL
HEL, HEL! LET'S GO AWAY
NOW!

THE NEXT DAY A GREAT AND
MIGHTY TOWER WAS BUILT
AND THE TOWER WAS
THE TOWER OF
THE TOWER OF
THE TOWER OF
THE TOWER OF

HEL, HEL! WHO ARE YOU
SPEAKING TO, THOUGH? IN AN
AWFUL LITTLE TOWN LIKE THIS
ALL, THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN
WHO CAN HELP YOU TO MAKE
THE HARBOR SAFE TO MAKE IT
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ALL, THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN
WHO CAN HELP YOU TO MAKE
THE HARBOR SAFE TO MAKE IT
SAFER BY GIVING YOU
HEL, HEL! THAT'S ALL
HEL, HEL! LET'S GO AWAY
NOW!

IT IS NOT GOOD
THOUGH I THINK
IT IS NOT
GOOD



THEY WERE TALKING TO THE
MERCHANT OF A TOWN
WHO WAS THE ONLY ONE
WHO COULD HELP THEM
TO MAKE THE HARBOR
SAFE TO MAKE IT
SAFER BY GIVING YOU
HEL, HEL! THAT'S ALL
HEL, HEL! LET'S GO AWAY
NOW!

HEL, HEL! WHO ARE YOU
SPEAKING TO, THOUGH? IN AN
AWFUL LITTLE TOWN LIKE THIS
ALL, THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN
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WHO CAN HELP YOU TO MAKE
THE HARBOR SAFE TO MAKE IT
SAFER BY GIVING YOU
HEL, HEL! THAT'S ALL
HEL, HEL! LET'S GO AWAY
NOW!



THE GREAT HORNED OWL IN THE
 SKY THAT WAS PERCHED WHERE
 THE GREAT OWL COULD BE
 SEEN WAS NOT IN THE SKY.
 IT WAS AN UNUSUAL SIGHT
 OF A GREAT OWL PERCHED ON
 A BRANCH OF A TREE IN THE
 NIGHT SKY, SQUARE FROM
 THE MOUNTAIN TO THE GREAT
 OCEAN.



INSIDE, THE WALL WAS COVERED
 WITH LAMPERS AND BURNING
 THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH
 THE SOUND OF
 MEN'S VOICES AND
 THE SOUND OF
 THE GREAT
 OCEAN.



JOHN M. JOHNSON HAD THE
 GREAT WALL, WHICH WAS
 OF GREAT SIZE, LIKE TO THE
 WALL OF THE GREAT
 OCEAN. IT WAS A GREAT
 WALL OF GREAT SIZE AND
 THE GREAT WALL WAS
 THE GREAT WALL.



THE GREAT WALL WAS A GREAT
 WALL OF GREAT SIZE AND
 THE GREAT WALL WAS
 THE GREAT WALL.



THE WALL
 IS GREAT!



JOHNSON MOVED QUICKLY INTO THE
 GREAT WALL AND THROUGH THE
 GREAT WALL. HE WAS
 IN THE GREAT WALL AND
 HE WAS IN THE GREAT WALL
 AND HE WAS IN THE GREAT
 WALL AND HE WAS IN THE
 GREAT WALL AND HE WAS
 IN THE GREAT WALL AND
 HE WAS IN THE GREAT WALL.



THE GREAT WALL WAS A GREAT
 WALL OF GREAT SIZE AND
 THE GREAT WALL WAS
 THE GREAT WALL.



IT WAS A GREAT WALL OF GREAT
 SIZE AND THE GREAT WALL
 WAS THE GREAT WALL AND
 HE WAS IN THE GREAT WALL
 AND HE WAS IN THE GREAT
 WALL AND HE WAS IN THE
 GREAT WALL AND HE WAS
 IN THE GREAT WALL AND
 HE WAS IN THE GREAT WALL.

IT WAS A GREAT WALL OF GREAT
 SIZE AND THE GREAT WALL
 WAS THE GREAT WALL AND
 HE WAS IN THE GREAT WALL
 AND HE WAS IN THE GREAT
 WALL AND HE WAS IN THE
 GREAT WALL AND HE WAS
 IN THE GREAT WALL AND
 HE WAS IN THE GREAT WALL.



THE GREAT WALL WAS A GREAT
 WALL OF GREAT SIZE AND
 THE GREAT WALL WAS
 THE GREAT WALL.

The next day, a notice was placed in the morning paper.



Well, look at this, boys!

It says that a copy has been made! And that we are all ordered to report to headquarters!



It is useless to think of going to any one of the boys' apartments to see the copy! It is all set up!



But what's the idea?

Well, look at that! These fellows' names could come out! You may be ordered to report to headquarters, boys!



The speaker was very bold. He said that he was not afraid of anything and that he was not afraid of the boys' names being made public. He said that he was not afraid of anything and that he was not afraid of the boys' names being made public.

Well, you fellows say if one of the boys' names is made public, what will you do?



Well, you fellows say if one of the boys' names is made public, what will you do?

Well, you fellows say if one of the boys' names is made public, what will you do?

A warning was also placed just outside the central square. It was a notice to the boys, saying that they should be careful of their names.



What do you think of this, boys?

Well, it's probably just a warning.

The name of a certain man was put in the morning paper. It was a notice to the boys, saying that they should be careful of their names.



Well, it's probably just a warning.

THE MAN COULDN'T WAIT A MOMENT MORE!



'LOOK AT THAT MONSTER!' IT'S ALL THIS FOR ONE MAN!

THEY SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT THE MONSTER, NOT THE MAN!

That is correct. Sacrificing in order to succumb to a disease is a waste of energy. It is not the way to live.



HE STARED AT THE BRIDGE!



THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT!



THE BRIDGE OF THE AIR CALLED UPON THE BRIDGE AND LIKE AN ELECTRIC BOLT, JOINING THE BRIDGE AND THE BRIDGE! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT!



THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT!



WELL, YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON!

YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON!

THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT! THE BRIDGE WOULD BEAT!



YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON! YOU'VE WON!

THEY'VE COME TO THE RIVER...
 AND WHY? BECAUSE... I DON'T KNOW...
 BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF
 HERE... NOW... THE GREAT FLOOD
 WILL BE HERE... AND YOU'VE GOT TO
 GET OUT... NOW!



THEY'VE COME TO THE RIVER...
 AND WHY? BECAUSE... I DON'T KNOW...
 BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF
 HERE... NOW... THE GREAT FLOOD
 WILL BE HERE... AND YOU'VE GOT TO
 GET OUT... NOW!



THEY'VE COME TO THE RIVER...
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 HERE... NOW... THE GREAT FLOOD
 WILL BE HERE... AND YOU'VE GOT TO
 GET OUT... NOW!



THEY'VE COME TO THE RIVER...
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 BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF
 HERE... NOW... THE GREAT FLOOD
 WILL BE HERE... AND YOU'VE GOT TO
 GET OUT... NOW!



THEY'VE COME TO THE RIVER...
 AND WHY? BECAUSE... I DON'T KNOW...
 BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF
 HERE... NOW... THE GREAT FLOOD
 WILL BE HERE... AND YOU'VE GOT TO
 GET OUT... NOW!



YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE
 THEM AWAY FROM HIM!

THEY'VE COME TO THE RIVER...
 AND WHY? BECAUSE... I DON'T KNOW...
 BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF
 HERE... NOW... THE GREAT FLOOD
 WILL BE HERE... AND YOU'VE GOT TO
 GET OUT... NOW!



THEY'VE COME TO THE RIVER...
 AND WHY? BECAUSE... I DON'T KNOW...
 BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF
 HERE... NOW... THE GREAT FLOOD
 WILL BE HERE... AND YOU'VE GOT TO
 GET OUT... NOW!



BECAUSE THIS IS THE
 GREAT FLOOD...
 AND YOU'VE GOT TO
 GET OUT... NOW!



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THE EXECUTION!



THIS IS THE STORY OF A MAN'S
LAST DAY IN PRISON. FOR THE
NEXT MONTHS HE HAD TO OCCUPY
HIS TIME WITH HIS OWN
THOUGHTS OF THE DEATH
WHICH WAS HIS SOCIETY HAS
CONSIDERED HIS PLACE WOULD
BE WORTH CLEAN?

TOGETHER IN THE DEATH
HE HAD TO BE AWARE OF
THE DEATH OF HIS OWN



WEDD & M. THE CLIPPING OF A GREAT WALL STOOD IN FRONT FROM A BARRICADE BUILT, WAS THE LAST DAY BEFORE...



WEDD & M. HE IS BARRICADED, AND STANDING IN THE FRONT OF THE WALL, FOR THE DAY'S WORK...



WEDD & M. HE BEGINS BRACING A 'MONEY' SLIP THE YEAR, UNDER THE NAME GENERAL, WEDD, WEDD, UNDER THE CLASSER OF WEDD, AND OTHER, CLASSIC OF A GROUP...



THE BITE AS THE ARRIVAL, THE YEAR HAS KNOWN HE HAS TAKEN, AND HE PROBABLY SAID, AS THING WENT TO THE POINT HE HAS BEEN OFFERED IN THAT TERRIBLE LAST STORM... AND HAS REMAINED UPON ANOTHER STORM AS POSSIBLE...



... INTO A BARRICADE?

WEDD & M. HE IS BARRICADED, AND STANDING IN THE FRONT OF THE WALL, FOR THE DAY'S WORK...

WEDD & M. HE BEGINS BRACING A 'MONEY' SLIP THE YEAR, UNDER THE NAME GENERAL, WEDD, WEDD, UNDER THE CLASSER OF WEDD, AND OTHER, CLASSIC OF A GROUP...



... BRACING OUT NEXT YEAR'S?

WEDD & M. HE BEGINS BRACING A 'MONEY' SLIP THE YEAR, UNDER THE NAME GENERAL, WEDD, WEDD, UNDER THE CLASSER OF WEDD, AND OTHER, CLASSIC OF A GROUP...



WEDD & M. HE BEGINS BRACING A 'MONEY' SLIP THE YEAR, UNDER THE NAME GENERAL, WEDD, WEDD, UNDER THE CLASSER OF WEDD, AND OTHER, CLASSIC OF A GROUP...

WEDD & M. HE BEGINS BRACING A 'MONEY' SLIP THE YEAR, UNDER THE NAME GENERAL, WEDD, WEDD, UNDER THE CLASSER OF WEDD, AND OTHER, CLASSIC OF A GROUP...

WEDD & M. HE BEGINS BRACING A 'MONEY' SLIP THE YEAR, UNDER THE NAME GENERAL, WEDD, WEDD, UNDER THE CLASSER OF WEDD, AND OTHER, CLASSIC OF A GROUP...



IT'S A BLUE SUIT AND A HAT... AND CLEAN CLOTHES TO THE LAST... A TIGHT, WELLS THE ENDOR.



IT'S A BLUE SUIT AND A HAT... AND CLEAN CLOTHES TO THE LAST... A TIGHT, WELLS THE ENDOR.



THEY WERE 'REARVIEW' IN THEIR CELLS... BEING GUARDED BY POLICE... AND THE OTHER 'REARVIEW' GUARDS ARE WATCHING THEM.



IT'S A BLUE SUIT... AND CLEAN CLOTHES TO THE LAST... A TIGHT, WELLS THE ENDOR.



WELL... WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

GET OUT WITH YOUR HEADS UP! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR MURDER!

A POLICE OFFICER... AND CLEAN CLOTHES TO THE LAST... A TIGHT, WELLS THE ENDOR.



I TELL YOU I WAS NEVER A MAN... AND CLEAN CLOTHES TO THE LAST... A TIGHT, WELLS THE ENDOR.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

IT'S A BLUE SUIT... AND CLEAN CLOTHES TO THE LAST... A TIGHT, WELLS THE ENDOR.



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I TELL YOU I WAS NEVER A MAN... AND CLEAN CLOTHES TO THE LAST... A TIGHT, WELLS THE ENDOR.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

HE DOESN'T WANT TO LIVE IN THE CITY AND STAY IN A ROOM AT THE CITY HOTEL. HE WANTS...



HE GOES DOWN VOLUNTARY TO THE POLICE AND TALKS TO THE MAN WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE HOTEL. HE TALKS TO THE MAN...



HE GOES DOWN VOLUNTARY TO THE POLICE AND TALKS TO THE MAN WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE HOTEL. HE TALKS TO THE MAN...



HE GOES DOWN VOLUNTARY TO THE POLICE AND TALKS TO THE MAN WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE HOTEL. HE TALKS TO THE MAN...



HE GOES DOWN VOLUNTARY TO THE POLICE AND TALKS TO THE MAN WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE HOTEL. HE TALKS TO THE MAN...



HE GOES DOWN VOLUNTARY TO THE POLICE AND TALKS TO THE MAN WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE HOTEL. HE TALKS TO THE MAN...



3:30 P.M. HE OWNS A BUNNY SLIP BY NAME... BUT IS WRITING THE RECEIPTS FOR HIS LAMB WALK.



3:45 P.M. HE LIGHTS ANOTHER CIGARETTE AND STARES THROUGH THE BARRED WINDOW ACROSS THE PAVILION WHERE HE HAS TO GO THE NEXT MORNING.



3:55 THERE... AND LIKE THE MAN BEHIND IT TAKES NOTICE, HE THINKS ABOUT WHAT HE COULD DO... REALLY? THEN HE GOES FOR MORE OF THE BUNNIES...



A MALLARD HUNTER HAS NOTICED... AND WHEN THE MAN HAS RETURNED FROM A LONG EVENING WITH ANOTHER CHAIR-ENTRUMENT PLAYER, THEY ARE STRANGLER IN THE ROOM BEHIND THE SCENE... AND THE MAN HAS SLIGHTLY BEEN THREATENED.



HE HUNTERS HAS BEEN THE GUNNERS WIFE TO GO AND SHE HAS BEEN FOR THEIR RECEPTION... HEAVY WEIGHT BUNNY CLOTHING... ALL HAS FITTED SO CLOSE PERFECTLY HE HAS FINISHED.



4:30 P.M. THE OTHER MAN... AND HE BEING FOUND OUT BY HIS OWN, TO THE GALT PERSON WHOSE THE MAN... WHO WILL LEAVE, MORTALITY... AND BELIEVE? THE FINAL.



"GUILTY... MAN" SAYS... AND HE HAS BEEN A MORTALITY.



5:00 P.M. THE LAST MAN AWAY.



5:02 P.M. LEAVES THE SCENE. ... RETURN TO THE STAY ROOM. ...



5:05 P.M. HE EXITS THE SCENE. ... THE LAST MAN REMAINING.



A WIFE AND FIVE CHILDREN ... WILL JOIN A GROUP ...



HE WILL BE THE LAST MAN ... WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN ...



5:45 P.M. A ... TO ...



8:02 P.M. THE FINAL HOUR BEGINS.

WHY DO THEY WANT
TO KILL ME? I DIDN'T
DO ANYTHING.
WHERE'S THE
WITNESS?
WHY DIDN'T
HE COME?



8:12 P.M.

IN THE
MOMENT
THE BOMB
BOMBERS
SUSPECT
AT THE
LAST
MOMENT.



8:20 P.M.

WHERE'S
THE BOMB
WHERE'S
THE WITNESS?
WHERE'S
HE AT?



8:30 P.M.

WHY DO THEY WANT
TO KILL ME?
WHERE'S THE
WITNESS?
WHERE'S HE AT?
WHERE?
WHERE?



8:50 P.M. A BOMB BOMBER ON THE PHONE WITH HIS BOMB.



8:55 P.M. HE ENTERS THE BOMBING CHAMBER.



8:58 P.M. HE IS BE HELD TO THE CHAIR, THE
BOMB IS NOT OVER THE BOMB.



9:05 P.M.





DICKER: THE PRISON DOCTOR HELPS FORWARD TO KILLER THE BODY!



WALTER JOHNSON, THE PRISON DOCTOR'S MAN FORMER THROUGH THE MOUTH OF FORTS IT WITHOUT REMAINING AS WITNESSES TO CAUSE DEATHS AT THE PRISON?



WELL, IT'S ONLY WHEN I HAVE TO SEE HOW QUOTE UNQUOTE ALSO QUOTE UNQUOTE OF COURSE IT?



THE MAN IN BLUE THROUGH A DOOR INTO THE PRISON ROOM.



WELL, THEN, HOW DID IT GO, THE FIRST?

WELL, THE MAN? THE MAN IN BLUE? THE MAN IN BLUE?

WELL, THEN, HOW DID IT GO, THE FIRST? THE MAN IN BLUE? THE MAN IN BLUE?



I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT IT UNTIL I SAID ON THE JOB FRONT, AND I COULD NOT GET... WELL, I... REASONABLY... INSTEAD OF SPEAKING TO ME...



I, I THINK THERE WAS SOMETHING I... I... HAVE COME TO SPEAK TO YOU?

THE FOLLOWING PAIR OF 'E.C. QUICKIES' POSES TWO PROBLEMS! THE FIRST ONE IS...

GIVEN: THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE!
 TO FIND: A WAY OUT!
 METHOD:

MURDER THE LOVER!



IN THIS FIRST OF A SERIES, YOU'RE JERRY'S BOSS, A HEALTHY BUSINESSMAN WHO'S IN YOUR LATE THIRTIES EARLY FORTIES AND WHO IS IN LOVE WITH YOUR BEAUTIFUL WIFE, LEAVING OUT ONE SET FOR YOUR BOSS FROM A BUSINESS MAN SILENT THIS MORNING, AND YOU TWO JERKS IN IN THE HAND OF THE BEST FINGER WALTER BROWN

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GOT THE GUN, BUT YOU CAN'T SHOOT BECAUSE YOU'RE THE GUNNER, AND YOU THINK YOU CAN BE KILLED WITH A THOUSAND OTHERS BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GOT THE GUN, AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GOT THE GUN.



"JERRY" ARE YOU OK? HOW COULD THAT DO THIS TO ME?



NO, I CAN'T SHOOT YOU, I WANT YOU TO LIVE, BUT YOU CAN'T LIVE WITH ME, CAN YOU?



WANT BARRING THE WAY? THE
WOODS TO THE LEFT? YOU
WANT TO, WE'RE BRINGING THEM
THROUGH THE BRUSH? YOU
WANT THEM TO GO TO THE
LEFT? WE'VE GOT THE LINE BARRING.



YOU WANT THEM TO GO TO THE
LEFT? WE'VE GOT THE LINE
BARRING. AS THE BLOOM OF
WINTER HAS COVERED YOUR
SUNGLASSES, YOU'VE GOT THE
TREES.



THE REPORT COMES THROUGH THE
BLIND FOREST? A REPORTING
WENT FROM A TREE TOP AND
FLIES OFF THROUGH THE TREES.
THEY'VE GOT THE BARRING.



YOU WANT THEM TO GO TO THE
LEFT? WE'VE GOT THE LINE
BARRING. AS YOU PULL THE
TRIGGER, YOU'VE GOT THE
TREES.



HE'S GOING TO THE LEFT? YOU'VE
GOT THE BARRING. AS YOU
PULL THE TRIGGER, YOU'VE
GOT THE TREES.



A CHANGING SCENE THE BARRING
THEY'VE GOT THE BARRING. AS
YOU PULL THE TRIGGER, YOU'VE
GOT THE TREES.



HE'S GOING TO THE LEFT? YOU'VE
GOT THE BARRING. AS YOU
PULL THE TRIGGER, YOU'VE
GOT THE TREES.



AS HE
GOES
TO THE
LEFT? YOU'VE
GOT THE BARRING.
AS YOU PULL THE
TRIGGER, YOU'VE
GOT THE TREES.

THE
END

SNOOZIE TO MIE!



I'D SUSPECTED IT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, BUT I WOULDN'T ADMIT IT TO MYSELF. A WOMAN DOESN'T LIKE TO FIND OUT THESE THINGS EARLY. SHE'S HER YEARS AND BELONGS TO SOMEONE BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE A BITTER OF HER NATURE, SO WOULD THESE THINGS TO A MAN? IT WAS ABOUT THREE OR FOUR YEARS AGO THAT I FIRST SUSPECTED IT.

WELL, YOU KNOW? YOU'RE DYING, ARE YOU?

NOTHING LATE FOR A BUSINESS MAN, ARE YOU? IT'S ABOUT...



HEARD YOU WERE ON THE BED AND ON THE WAY OUT.

I'M SORRY ABOUT A MILE OF THE BOYS. SUGGESTED A NEW NAME OF FORTH AND OFFICE I MADE IT.

YOU'RE GOING TO BE SORRY? I WON'T BE SORRY. YOU'RE RIGHT, YOU SHOULD BE SORRY. WHY SORRY?



AM I MAD, A GUY DOESN'T LIKE TO FIND THAT HIS BROTHER-IN-LAWING IS WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THE BROTHER-IN-LAWING IS WITH ANOTHER WOMAN. THAT IS LIKE MY BROTHER WITH HIS BROTHER.



LET ANOTHER MAN?

NO, HE'S NOT. HE'S WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

OH, DADDY? YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S NOT WITH ANOTHER WOMAN. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S NOT WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.



I DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN. I WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

YOU'RE CRAZY. YOU'RE CRAZY. YOU'RE CRAZY.

I DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN. I WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.



DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN. YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.



DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.



DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.



DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN? YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.



I WANT A FURTHER GLANCE AT YOU! SHE
 IS BEAUTIFUL AND UNBROKEN BY THE
 DEGRADING SITUATION SHE'S IN.

I, THE ONLY I
 DISAPPOINT
 YOU, SHE SAID
 (TO)

NOT EXACT
 THAT I DO,
 (TO)

YOU'VE GOT
 TO GO AWAY
 AND LEAVE
 ME ALONE!
 (TO)

HOW MARVELOUS THESE TWO A MAN AND WOMAN
 BECOMING THE OTHER.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO
 BE A MAN, YOU
 GOT TO BE A
 MAN. YOU CAN'T
 BE A MAN AND
 A WOMAN AT THE
 SAME TIME.

YOU'VE GOT
 TO GO AWAY
 AND LEAVE
 ME ALONE!
 (TO)



THE WOMAN WAS GOING TO
 GETTING OFF BY HERSELF
 AND A MOMENT OF SILENCE...
 FROM BOTH SIDES WITH HER
 HEAD DOWN... SHE WAS
 FIGHTING FROM THE TOP OF
 THE WORLD.

FINALLY I WOULD COME,
 WOULD BE HAPPY, I WOULD
 BE WITH YOU THE WAY YOU
 WERE TO ME.

LET'S GO! LET'S GO! LET'S GO!
 WE'VE GOT TO GO! WE'VE GOT
 TO GO! WE'VE GOT TO GO!
 WE'VE GOT TO GO! WE'VE GOT
 TO GO! WE'VE GOT TO GO!



HE'S NOT
 HERE!
 (TO)

HE'S NOT
 HERE!
 (TO)

HE'S NOT
 HERE!
 (TO)

HE'S NOT
 HERE!
 (TO)

HE'S NOT HERE! FOR A MOMENT SHE WAS
 HAPPY... SHE WAS HAPPY TO
 SEE HIM, BUT SHE WASN'T
 HAPPY TO SEE HIM WITH
 HER. SHE WASN'T HAPPY
 TO SEE HIM WITH HER.
 SHE WASN'T HAPPY TO
 SEE HIM WITH HER.

I, THE ONLY I
 DISAPPOINT
 YOU, SHE SAID
 (TO)

LET'S GO! LET'S GO! LET'S GO!
 WE'VE GOT TO GO! WE'VE GOT
 TO GO! WE'VE GOT TO GO!
 WE'VE GOT TO GO! WE'VE GOT
 TO GO! WE'VE GOT TO GO!

HE'S NOT
 HERE!
 (TO)



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YOUR MAN
MURDER?"

"THERE WHEN I SAW THAT HE
KILLED I DECIDED TO GET
AWAY. BUT I'M SURE THAT
IF I WERE HELPER, HE
WOULDN'T LEAVE ME."



"WELL, NOW I HAVE
THE MURKELMAN,
AND HE'S AFTER YOU."

"HE TALKS LIKE THAT? I'D
NOT GOING TO LET HIM? I
CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE YOU
TOLD EVERYONE THAT THE
FINGER WAS? I WOULD
LIVE IT DOWN."



"WELL, NOW I HAVE
THE MURKELMAN,
AND HE'S AFTER YOU."

"YOU'RE GOING TO
STAY HERE, AND I'M
GOING TO GO. I'VE BEEN
TALKING TO
MURKELMAN."



"MURKELMAN?"

"HE'S GOING TO
KILL YOU, THEN
KILL ME IF
I DON'T HELP."



"YOUR MAN,
MURKELMAN,
IS AFTER YOU."

"AND I CAN'T
LET HIM
KILL ME? HOW COULD I
HAVE BEEN
KILLED AND NOT
TOLD YOU? THEY
WOULDN'T EVEN
TALK TO ME."



"I'M SURE THAT YOU
WILL FIND THEM
SOMEWHERE
TO GO."

"I'LL TELL YOU THE
ONLY PLACE WHERE
YOU CAN GO TO
HIDE. BUT YOU
MUST BE QUICK
BEFORE THEY
FIND YOU."



"WHAT ARE YOU
SAYING?"

"I'M TALKING OF THE
PLACE WHERE YOU
CAN HIDE THE MONEY."
"WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?"



YOU'RE NOT JAZZERS!

WELL, WHEN I SAW THAT IT WAS ONLY YOU GUYS I WASN'T WORRIED! BUT I'M WORRIED NOW BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT JAZZERS!



WELL, NOW I KNOW THE DIFFERENCE... AND I'M SURE YOU'RE NOT!

NO, YOU'RE NOT SURE? I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU! I DON'T APPROVE TO HAVE YOU HERE BECAUSE THAT YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT JAZZERS! DON'T YOU KNOW?



PLEASE DON'T DO THAT!

YOU'RE GOING TO BE A MANAGER! YOU'RE GOING TO BE A MANAGER! YOU'RE GOING TO BE A MANAGER!



NO, NO, NO!

I'M GOING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT YOU! YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT JAZZERS!



PLEASE DON'T DO THAT!

NO, YOU'RE NOT SURE? I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU! I DON'T APPROVE TO HAVE YOU HERE BECAUSE THAT YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT JAZZERS! DON'T YOU KNOW?



ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO HAPPEN?

NO, YOU'RE NOT SURE? I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU! I DON'T APPROVE TO HAVE YOU HERE BECAUSE THAT YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT JAZZERS! DON'T YOU KNOW?



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, MANAGER?

ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO HAPPEN?



WOW!
 I'M THE
 ENNY OF MY
 DORM BUDGE!
SUBSCRIBED TO
RUSS COCHRAN'S
EXTRA-LARGE
COMICS!
 AND I NEVER
 MISS AN
 ISSUE!
RESPOND!

SUBSCRIBE!

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WALT OUT OF A BLOOD BATH!

Dear Russ Cochran

I deeply dislike the new "format" of making all your good old comic books in an extra, extra large size I loved 'em the way they were! And the price! You would probably get less business with that price! It's not like kids carry around \$3.00 in their pockets!

Zachary Denton

P.S. Thanks anyway

Dear Mr. Cochran,

I would like to thank you for publishing the EC Library. You have made a lot of nostalgic middle-aged fan addicts happy. To me these horror comics are one of the highlights of my youth. They are to me what the financial aid was to Charles Foster Kane.

LL Farris
Bogart, AR

Dear Russ Cochran,

I concede that this new larger format shows the art of these fine artists better, but this is outweighed by the price increase in these damn economic times. The cumbersome size makes shopping difficult, and on top of all that I feel like I'm carrying around a child's coloring book.

Please bring back the regular comic book size stories.

Scott Overholt

P.S. Maybe a review of the size is out of your Eric's comic department?

Dear Mr. Cochran,

My love for the EC comics began in 1960 when I purchased #1 and #11 of your EC Classics. They purchased seven original ECs including *HELLBLAZER* #12 (May-June 1952). There is a rough estimate that someone could send for information about the Ground Observer Corps. A person sends their name and address on the coupon. The person writes:

OE Johnson
2811 Burns St. Forest Hill
LI 11404, NY

If OE Johnson is reading this, or if anybody who knows him, could you please write me. I would really like to get in touch with him because probably in his wildest thoughts, he wouldn't think 38 years later a seventeen year old kid would have a comic book he once owned. Thank you.

EC will never die!
John Harnish
P.O. 3258 20 C
Brown Bow, ME 05602

Dear Russ & Ghoul, Gals. et al of EC

At my local comic store today I found myself looking for my EC fix at the latest home or science fiction comic in the stacks. What I found was an over-grown comic TALEN FROM THE CRYPT which apparently had when published somewhere along the way from West Plains. The puppy was huge (clearing the small aisles nearby) I felt to "drop a line or letter in your talent bowl" as they say in ANIMAL HOUSE but I'm not sure I like this new format on a permanent basis, especially at \$4 a pop. Don't you know there's a recession going on? How's a little kid going to spring a buck for a comic and still subscribe to Playboy? Oh, it was a nice change of pace to see OK WE did that old witch up close and personal, but I'm only 32 and my eyes still work good. This huge printed book takes like it belongs in a comfortable home so the old folks can see it from across the room. When am I going to put this thing next? How will I store it and how'll the future generations of my offspring? How will I get cardboard and paper? It's kinda funny, so well. Get the problem? Go back to regular size and, while you're at it, bring back the old-E in a separate book. Do this format once per year if you have to.

Gill Franks
Bar Margot

Dear Russ,

I just today purchased issue #1 of TALEN FROM THE CRYPT at one of the area comic shops. You asked for opinions on your experiment—and, this line is definitely a case of "ask and you shall receive" I DON'T LIKE IT, and the reasons why have been enumerated for you below:

- (1) Too big, clumsy to handle, clumsy for retailer to display.
- (2) Keeping it nice - who has plastic polypropylene mylar or whatever to fit these things?
- (3) Price - well, yes, 2 EC comics for \$3.00 isn't a terribly high price. However, 2 ECs for \$3.00 was an even better deal.
- In summation, it is just hard for me to see where paying 50% as much for the same thing plus the clumsy size-related storage problems and all is a better deal for the consumer. It's still an EC, they're still great reading—I don't feel the larger panels and price justify the means.

Thanks for the opportunity to criticize, blast, critique etc., etc.

Best regards
Jeff Peltier
Moulton, OH

64 PAGES OF VINTAGE EC HORROR!
TALES CRYPT
Presents
THE VAULT OF HORROR



64 PAGES OF VINTAGE EC HORROR!
TALES CRYPT
Presents
THE HAUNT OF FEAR



64 PAGES OF VINTAGE EC HORROR!
TALES FROM THE CRYPT



64 PAGES OF VINTAGE EC HORROR!
TALES CRYPT
Presents
THE HAUNT OF FEAR



TERROR



NO. 32
OCT. - NOV.

10¢

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

FEATURING...



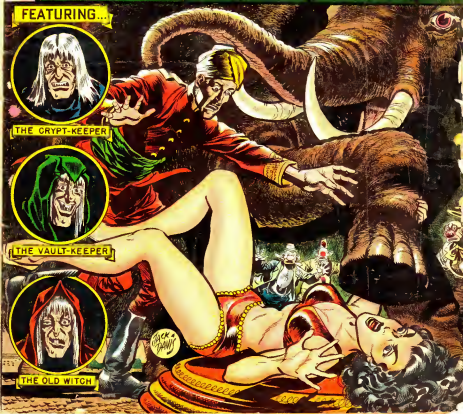
THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



**HEE, HEE! E.C.'S SCIENCE-FICTION
MAGS MUST BE PRETTY FIENDISH
TO GIVE THESE TWO GHOULS
A CHARGE! LOOK AT 'EM!**



**E.C. IS
PROUDEST
OF ITS TWO
SCIENCE-FICTION
MAGAZINES!**



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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

WENHEM! COME IN, FRIENDS! COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! ONCE AGAIN WE MEET FOR OUR SHIVERY SESSION! YES, IT'S YOUR HOST IN HORROR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, OPENING HIS MAD-MAD WITH A TERRORFUL TALE GUARANTEED TO CURL YOUR HAIR AND CURDLE YOUR BLOOD! SEVERAL ISSUES BACK, I TOLD YOU A TARIK ABOUT A BUTCHER WHICH PROVED VERY POPULAR! ONE AVID FAN EVEN SENT ME A CHECKER, WITH COMPLETE DIRECTIONS FOR WHAT HE WANTED ME TO DO WITH IT... BUT IT DIDN'T SINK IN! SO I DECIDED TO TELL YOU ANOTHER STORY ABOUT A BUTCHER... ONE THAT I'M SURE WILL SCORCH YOUR SPARE-RIBS! I CALL THIS MEATY LITTLE MORRID MELODRAMA...

AS THE NAUSEOUS CARNIVAL REMAINED ON A PARTICULARLY HOT DAY...

"TAIN'T THE MEAT...
IT'S THE HUMANITY!"



NO ONE PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO EACH BRISTLE BEFORE WORLD WAR II! HE WAS JUST ANOTHER SMALL TOWN BUTCHER! BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THE WAR! SUDDENLY, WITH THE ADVENT OF MEAT RATIONING... RED POINTS... AND CEILING PRICES... EACH BRISTLE BECAME VERY POPULAR...

MORNING, ZACK!

MORNING, MR. BRISTLE! MORNING, MORNING, MORNING!

ON LINE EARLY I SEE!



HEH, HEH! YEP! SUDDENL'Y, OL' ZACH BRISTLE FOUND HIMSELF THE MOST POPULAR MAN IN TOWN! HEH, HEH! WHY NOT? HE WAS THE ONLY BUTCHER! REMEMBER THOSE DAYS, KIDDIEST RATION BOOKS? SO MANY RED POINTS FOR EACH POUND OF MEAT? SO MANY RED POINTS ALLOWED EACH PERSON PER MONTH! IT WAS PRETTY TOUGH... THE SITUATION, THAT IS...



OH, DEAR! I ONLY HAVE FORTY-ONE POINTS LEFT, MR. BRISTLE! CAN I... ONE THEM TO YOU?



NO SKELDIN STEAKS, MR. BRISTLE!

SORRY, MR. FUDDY'S JUST SOLD THE LAST ONE TO MR. GUSPI-TORP! I COULDN'T YOU HAVE A FEW PORK CHOPS?



SORRY, MISS GICK-ESBURG! NOTHING BUT SALAMY LEFT! I EXPECT ANOTHER SHIPMENT TOMORROW! BUT YOU'D BETTER BE ON LINE EARLY! FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED, YOU KNOW?

POOF MR. BRISTLE? HE TRIES SO HARD! AND HE'S SO HONEST!

THIS RATIONING CERTAINLY IS HARD ON HIM!



YEP! MEAT RATIONING WAS HARD ON MR. BRISTLE! THAT IS, UNTIL HE DISCOVERED AN INTERESTING FACT... IF I COULD GET A SUB-NICE STEAK, MR. BRISTLE, I'D... ER... PAY! WE'LL... SORT OF... FORGET ABOUT THE DECLIN' PRICE!

BUT... THAT'S SUB-NONEST, MR. VANDERCLIFF! THAT'S BLACK MARKET!



NO TELLERS HOW LONG THIS WAR WILL LAST, ZACH! MIGHT AS WELL MAKE MAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES! THERE ARE A FEW OF US WHO'D BE WILLING TO PAY ENOUGH TO GET WHAT WE WANT!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE... THE POOR PEOPLE... MR. VANDERCLIFF?



SUIT YOURSELF, ZACH! YOU'RE ONE OF THEM, NOW! YOU COULD BE PRETTY WELL OFF IF YOU USED YOUR HEAD! THINK IT OVER!

I... I WILL, SIR! I'LL THINK IT OVER!



ONE THOUSAND! TWO THOUSAND! OH . . . PARDON ME? I WAS JUST COUNTING MY LOOP FROM THE BLACK MARKET OPERATION I WAS IN DURING THE WAR! HEH, HEH! THERE WAS A SHORTAGE OF CASSETS, Y'KNOW? I DID UP AN IDEA ON HOW TO GAIN M'ALL. I HAD TO GO WAG CLEAN OFF THE DIRT AND POLISH 'EM UP AGAIN! HEH, HEH! AS FOR MR. GRISTLE . . . WELL . . . LET'S LOOK IN ON HIS HOME LIFE!



JUNIOR! EAT YOUR MEAT!
I'M NOT HUNGRY!
SEVENTEEN POINTS!



YOU SAY SOMETHING, I'CH?
HUN? OH! NO! I WAS JUST THINKING, DEAR!



YEP! MR. GRISTLE THOUGHT IT ALL OVER! AND HE MADE UP HIS MIND . . .

WHY, MR. GRISTLE? THERE ISN'T A DECENT PIECE OF MEAT IN YOUR WHOLE SHOWCASE!

THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT, MRS. GRUNDY! SHORTAGE, Y'KNOW!



BUT I WAITED ON LINE FOR TWO HOURS! I'M THE FIRST CUSTOMER YOU'VE HAD TODAY!

THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT, MRS. GRUNDY! I'M SORRY!



BUT AT NIGHT, SHADY FRIVIES WOULD COME TO MR. GRISTLE'S STORE . . .

HERE'S YOUR STEAK, MR. VANDERLIFF! TEN POUNDS!

AND HERE'S YOUR PUPPY DOGS, MR. GRISTLE! OH! I'VE GOT ANOTHER CUSTOMER FOR YOU! HE WANTS STEAK, TOO!



BUT I CAN'T GET ANYMORE, MR. VANDERLIFF! I DON'T GET ENOUGH POINTS! AS IT IS, I'M GIVING THE LEFT-OVERS TO THE FOLKS IN TOWN!

YOU COULD FIGURE SOMETHING OUT, MR. GRISTLE! THE FOLKS IN TOWN PAY POINTS FOR THEIR MEAT! WHY THEN ANY MEAT THAT YOU CAN GET WITHOUT RED POINTS?



... AND AT THE THREE-QUARTER MARK, IT'S PATHHEAD, BY A FAT HEAD! AND NOW... AT THE STRAIGHT... IT'S... IT'S... HOLD IT! PATHHEAD JUST STUMBLED! LOOKS LIKE HE BUSTED HIS LEG! TOO BAD! NOW THEY'LL HAVE TO SADDY HIM! AND HE WAS SUCH A GOOD HORSE, TOO! ER... MR BRISTLE? YOU LISTENING?



JUNIOR? EAT YOUR MEAT?

I'M NOT HUNGRY! NEXT TIME 'SPECT ME TO EAT LIKE A HORSE!

HORSE MEAT!



YOU SAY SOMETHING, JACK?

HON? OH! NO! I WAS JUST FANNING MY EARS!



YET! MR BRISTLE FOUND THE SOLUTION TO HIS PROBLEM! HE BEGAN BUYING HORSEMEAT, AND PASSING IT OFF TO HIS POOR CUSTOMERS AS THE REAL THING... THEREBY GETTING THOSE PRECIOUS RED-POINTS...

BYT YOU HAVE SUCH A NICE SELECTION NOW, MR. BRISTLE!

YES! WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE, MRS. SREDF? SOME STEAK? CHOPS?



AND WITH THE PREVIOUS RED-POINTS, HE'D PURCHASE GOOD MEAT WHICH HE'D SELL IN THE BLACK MARKET.

THESE STEAKS ARE GOING TO COST YOU MORE MONEY, MR. VANDERLUFF! I'M TAKING NO CHANCES NOW! FIVE DOLLARS A POUND FROM HERE ON!

URAN DEAR! NOW, LISTEN! I NEED TWENTY POUNDS MEAT TIME! I'M HAVING A RANGUET! AND MY FRIENDS NEEDS TEN POUNDS! CAN YOU GET IT FOR US?



SOON, THE HORSEMEAT WASN'T ENOUGH! MR BRISTLE HAD TO FIND OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPLY.

LOOK, BRISTLE! I'M SUPPOSED TO SELL THIS MEAT TO GOOD! IT'S TOO OLD FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION! BEEN LAYING AROUND THE WAREHOUSE TOO LONG! NOW, FOR A PRICE...

AND NO POINTS?



NO POINTS, BRISTLE!

I'LL TALK IT! BUT, NOT A WORD, UNDERSTAND? NOT A WORD TO ANYONE!



HEARD! FIRST HORSEMEAT. NOW STALE MEAT! MR. CRISTLE CERTAINLY WAS SINKING LOWER AND LOWER! BUT MOONE SUSPECTED WHEN MR. CRISTLE WASH A FEW PEOPLE... THE POORER PEOPLE IN TOWN... FELL SERIOUSLY ILL!



HOW'S YOUR HUSBAND TODAY, MRS. HORTON?



BETTER, THANKS! NOW, I AIN'T BEEN FEELIN' TOO GOOD!



BUT ONE NIGHT

MR. CRISTLE ISN'T IN? HE'S OUT WALKING?



WELL, JUST TELL 'EM HE CAN PICK UP ANOTHER LOAD OF THE SLOPP!



THE... THE WHAT?



THE STALE MEAT! THE JUNK! THE STUFF HE'S BEEN SELLIN' AS GOOD STUFF! YOU KNOW!



OH! Y-YES! I'LL TELL HIM!



TELL 'EM I GOT SOME HORSEMEAT FOR 'EM. TOOT 'ERE!



MRS. CRISTLE CLOSED THE DOOR AND STARED AT IT FOR A MINUTE! THEN SHE WENT OUT! SHE ARRIVED AT THE BUTCHER-SHOP A FEW MINUTE'S LATER...



HERE'S YOUR MEAT, MR. VANDERCLIFF!

THANKS, TATCH!

DON'T TAKE IT, MR. VANDERCLIFF! IT'S STALE... GEE! IT MAY BE HORSE-MEAT!

SARAH!



HEH, HEH! NOT THIS STUFF, MR. CRISTLE! I PAY SIX BUCKS A POUND FOR THIS STUFF! DAD'S REGULAR CUSTOMERS GET THE JUNK!

SIX DOLLARS! SLACK MARET!



BRIGHT KID, THIS SARAH? GUIDE WITH NUMBERS! SELLING PRICE \$\$\$ SIX DOLLARS TO HANDED OFF BLACK MARKET! IT FIGURES! BUT SHE'S A GOOD MD, MRS. BRISTLE! SHE'S REAL MAD...



AFTER JACK'S CUSTOMER LEAVES...

YOU'RE SELLING MEAT ON THE BLACK MARKET!

YOU KEEP OUT OF THIS SARAH!



AND YOU'RE PASSING OFF HORSE MEAT AND STALE MEAT TO YOUR CUSTOMERS FOR RED-POINTS?

WE'RE GOING TO BE RICH, SARAH!



I DON'T WANT THAT KIND OF MONEY! MR. BOSTON WAS TERRIBLY SICK! WAS IT FROM YOUR MEAT?

PROBABLY! WHO CARES? ANYWAY, I WANT THE MONEY! AFTER THE WAR I'M GOING TO RETIRE! I'VE SAVED AWAY SIX GRAND ALREADY!



YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THIS! IT'S AGAINST THE LAW!

HAN! ASK OLD SHORR! HE'LL TALK ABOUT HIS SADDLEBONE BUSINESS! FIND OUT ABOUT FINEY'S TIRE HACKET! EVERYBODY'S DOIN' IT! WHY SHOULDN'T I?



YET! MRS. BRISTLE WAS A REAL MAD... BUT SHE COULDN'T TALK JACK OUT OF IT! HE WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE HIS PILE... NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT...

YOU, BRISTLE! GOT SOME TAUNTED MEAT! REAL BAD! NO ONE'LL KNOW IT, THOUGH! GOT A PROCESS THAT COVERS IT UP! THEY WON'T FIND OUT TILL IT'S INSIDE 'EM! THEY'LL FEEL PRETTY BAD!

I NEED SOME POINTS QUICK! GOT A BIG ORDER TO FILL! GRAY! I'LL TAKE IT!



SO JACK BRISTLE BOUGHT THE SPOILED MEAT AND SOLD IT TO HIS CUSTOMERS...

MY SISTER-IN-LAW IS HERE FROM OUT OF TOWN! SHE'S AMAZED THAT WE CAN GET ALL THE MEAT WE WANT!

HEN! JUST TRY TO DO MY BESS! MRS. ASACHOSKI! WHAT'LL IT BE?



HEH, HEH! DON'T TURN OVER THE PAGE TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS! YOU'LL GET TO IT! IT'S COMING! THE BEGINNING OF THE END COMES TO START RIGHT NOW! ER... FLOWERS FOR MRS. ARACROMBIE? WHAT KIND? WHY LILIES... OF COURSE! DEAD, Y'KNOW!



DID YOU HEAR? MRS. ARACROMBIE JUST DIED! POISONED! THEY THINK HER SISTER-IN-LAW DID IT!



POISONED? THEY'RE PERFORMING AN AUTOPSY RIGHT NOW!

EXCUSE ME, MRS. GABBER! IF THAT'S ALL YOU WANT, I'D LIKE TO CLOSE UP!



MR. BRISTLE BROGHE MRS. GABBER OUT OF THE STORE AND LOCKED IT UP! MR. BRISTLE WAS SCARED! MR. BRISTLE WAS GOING TO HIT THE ROAD... LEAVE TOWN... TAKE IT ON THE LAM...



HOW'D ZACH 'GLOSIN' UP EARLY, AIN'T CRA? SCARED OF THE MANIAC?

MANIAC? WHAT MANIAC?

WHY, THE ONE'S GOIN' AROUND POISONIN' EVERYONE! MRS. ARACROMBIE... AND MRS. SWEED... AND MR. SWEED... AND SO... MAN BRUNN! ALL DEAD! WATCH YOURSELF GOIN' HOME, ZACH!



Y'YES! WELL! GOODNIGHT, PETE!

MR. BRISTLE RAN ALL THE WAY HOME! FIRST THING HE DID WHEN HE GOT THERE WAS TAKE HIS BLACK MARKET MONEY FROM ITS HIDING PLACE! ELEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS!



PACK YOUR THINGS - SARAH! WE'RE LEAVIN' TOWN!

YOU'RE IN TROUBLE! THEY FOUND OUT! I... I WARNED YOU NOT TO SELL HORSEMEAT.

IT'S WORSE THAN THAT, SARAH! FOUR PEOPLE ARE DEAD ALREADY! I SOLD THEM FAIRFAX MEAT!



YOU... YOU WHAT?

YOU... YOU WHAT?

I'LL BATTER, SARAH! DON'T YOU HEAR? HE KILLED 'IM! HE SOLD 'EM POWDERED MEAT! AN' NOW IT'S DINING INTO THAT FEMALE BRAIN! AN' THAT'S IT! GET MAG-FOOT GOOD AND MAG-FREN... HEH...



YOU'RE A MURDERER!



JUNIOR! HE'S EATING AT NEBBIE NORTON'S HOUSE!



AT THIS MOMENT, JUNIOR STAGGERED INTO THE KITCHEN! HE LOOKED A LITTLE GREEN AROUND THE EYES!



I... I FEEL SICK NOWMY!

JUNIOR! BABY!

DUDE!

LITTLE JUNIOR COLLAPSED ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR. HE'S DEAD, EACH! DEAD!



YOU KILLED HIM, TOO... OOO BOO... EH... EH... OOO BOO

SARAH! PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE!

WHEN THEY UNLOCKED ZACH BRISTLE'S BUTCHER SHOP THE NEXT MORNING, THEY FOUND MRS. BRISTLE STANDING BEHIND THE COUNTER... STARING INTO SPACE! SHE WORE A BLOOD-SMEARED APRON AROUND HER NECK! BEFORE HER... IN THE MEAT SHOWCASE... ZACH BRISTLE HAD BEEN GLOUNCILY CARVED AND LAID OUT IN THE VARIOUS TRAYS...



GOOD LORD!

TAUNTED MEAT, TAUNTED MEAT, ANNOY!

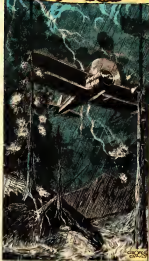
ALL RIGHT, SO YOU AIN'T HUNGRY? YOU CAN WINDOW SHOP, CAN'T YOU? NOT INTERESTED, EH? MAYBE YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING A FORMAL BANQUET GIVEN BY THE SHOULD, ZOMBIES, WEREWOLVES, AND VAMPIRE'S BLACK-MARKET-BOODIES SYNDICATE IN HONOR OF ZACH BRISTLE? HE WILL BE SERVED! OHMY! STILL NOT INTERESTED, EH? HOW ABOUT COMING ON TO THE PAUL-KEEPER THEM? HE'S NOT INTERESTING, TOO? GOT A BORING STORY FOR YOU? THEN I'LL DO YOU LATER WITH ANOTHER CREEPY-GRIFFY-COLLECTOR'S-ITEMS.



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELL, HEY! WELCOME TO THE VAULT OF HORROR, FIENDS! YEP, IT'S YOUR HOST, THE VAULT-KEEPER, SHRIEKING! EVER HEAR OF MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS? SURE YOU HAVE! WELL, I'LL BET YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF MOUNTAIN CRAWLERS... SOUTH AMERICAN VARIETY! MY STORY CONCERNS ONE! I CALL THIS BRISTLING TALE OF TERROR ...

ROPED IN!



THE DOOR TO THE WARDEN ELLIS, BICKLEY, AND MORRAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY SWINGS OPEN AND THE STRANGER ENTERS! HE LOOKS AROUND AND THEN STEPS UP TO THE RECEPTION DESK...

YES, SIR? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

WILL YOU TELL MR. DONALD MORRAN TO STEP OUT HERE FOR A MOMENT? MY CREDENTIALS ...



THE SECRETARY LOOKS DOWN AT THE STRANGER'S BLISTERING BADGE AND BASTIST SHE SWITCHES ON THE OFFICE INTER-COM AND WHISPERS...

MR. MORRAN! THERE'S A GENTLEMAN OUT HERE... TO SEE YOU!

HAVE HIM WAIT, MISS BALLENTINE! I'M BUSY...



HE... HE'S FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, SIR!

OH? ALL RIGHT! I'LL BE RIGHT OUT!



DONALD MORRAN COMES OUT OF HIS OFFICE...

YES? WHAT IS IT?

MR. MORRAN, YOU WERE IN COMPLETE CHARGE OF THE CONTRACT FOR THE CITY HOSPITAL, WERE YOU NOT?



I *WAS!* I HANDED THE ENTIRE CONSTRUCTION JOB MYSELF! WHY?

MR. MORRAN YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!



WHAT? BUT... BUT THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!

THERE'S NO MISTAKE, MR. MORRAN. THE UPPER FLOOR OF THE HOSPITAL COLLAPSED THIS MORNING. AN INVESTIGATION SHOWED THAT THE CONCRETE USED WAS SUB-STANDARD! ALMOST ALL SAID! BETTER COME ALONG *QUICK!*



BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I ORDERED THAT CONCRETE MYSELF! I SPECIFIED THE MIXTURE! IT WAS A GOOD MIXTURE! NO! LET ME GO! I WON'T...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

MORRAN? WHAT DOES HE WANT?

I WANT HIM FOR HOMICIDE, GENTLEMEN! YOUR PARTNER, HERE, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF TWENTY-ONE HOSPITAL PATIENTS!

WHAT? MORRAN? IS THIS TRUE?

MR. MORRAN? THERE'S SERIOUS MISTAKE!



THE ONLY MISTAKE WAS THE ONE YOUR PARTNER MADE WHEN HE USED TOO LITTLE CONCRETE AND TOO MUCH SAND IN THAT HOSPITAL JOB HE HANDLED!

GOOD LORD!

MORGAN! THAT'S HOW THAT'S GOING YOUR HONEST MORGAN!

ELLIE... WAGNER SURELY BELIEVE HE' I DON'T DO THIS...!

BETTER COME ALONG SOONER, MR. MORGAN! LET'S GO!

OH DEAR THE SCANDAL! OUR REPUTATION!

AFTER MR. MORGAN WILED FROM THE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY OFFICE BY THE DETECTIVE, MR. WAGNER, THE SENIOR PARTNER OF THE CONCERN, TURNS TO THE OTHER TWO...

SETTLEMENT! ... I THINK WE SHOULD HAVE A DEMONSTRATION IN MY OFFICE IMMEDIATELY!

O-YES, MR. WAGNER!

OF COURSE, MR. WAGNER!

WELL, HEH! LOOKS LIKE MR. ELLIE, MR. PICKLEBARD MR. WAGNER ARE SHOCKED OVER THIS LATEST TORN OF EVENTS SHAKED UP! LOOK AT 'EM... CHATTERING LIKE A BUNCH OF MONKEYS! THEY BEEN NICE AND RESPECTABLE, EH. THE KIND THAT ARE APPALLED BY DISHONESTY! WELL, COME ON IN AND LISTEN! YOU'LL BE SHOCKED...

THAT'S SURELY SCREAMING, NOW HOW DO I KNOW IT WOULD COLLAPSE THAT MIXTURE STOOD UP IN THAT SCHOOL JOB MORGAN HANDLED LAST YEAR.

SO FAR, THAT IS!

WHAT ARE YOU COMPLAINING ABOUT, ELLIE! YOU GOT A NYE FAT DOWN OF THE DOWN WE SAVED!

I'M NOT COMPLAINING! ONLY THEY'RE ON TO US NOW!

SO WHAT! WE'VE ONLY SUBSTITUTED CHEAP MATERIALS ON MORGAN'S JOBS! WE'LL TAKE THE BAP! HE'S TRAPPED... TRAPPED IN A WEB OF DISHONESTY! STANTAL EVIDENCE!

WE'LL JUST KEEP KEEP KEEP SHOCKED BY THIS WHOLE DEAL! THEY'LL NEVER SUSPECT US!

YEP! THAT'S THE PICTURE, KOBES! ELLIS, BUCKLEY, AND WAGNER HAVE BEEN TAKING THE HIGH GRADE CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL ORDERED BY MORGAN ON EVERY JOB HE'S HANDLED AND SUBSTITUTING CHEAP, INFERIOR GRADE STUFF! THEN THEY'VE BEEN POCKETING THE DIFFERENCE! POOR MORGAN IS RESPONSIBLE! YES, THEY'VE SPUN A REAL LITTLE WEB OF EVIDENCE AROUND THE INNOCENT FOURTH PARTNER! NOW THE EVIDENCE IS BEING WEIGNED! LISTEN...



GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY? HAVE YOU REACHED A VERDICT?

WE HAVE, YOUR HONOR! WE FIND THE DEFENDENT, DONALD MORGAN, GUILTY OF MANSLAUGHTER!

NO!
NO!



YES, DONALD! YES! THE WEB IS TIGHT! IT'S BEEN WOVEN WELL! YOU'RE DONE FOR...

I'M INNOCENT, I TELL YOU... INNOCENT!

TAKE HIM AWAY!



AT THE OFFICES OF THE WAGNER, ELLIS, AND BUCKLEY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY...

WHY THE SUDDEN MEETING, WAGNER?

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MORGAN GENTLEMEN!



DO YOU REMEMBER THAT SULLIVAN CONTRACT WE BID ON THE POWER PLANT AND DAM? WELL, WE GOT IT!

KNAPT! WHY THAT'S WORTH A FORTUNE! AND THERE'S ONLY THREE OF US TO SPLIT THE PROFITS, NOW!



WHEN DO WE LEAVE, WAGNER?

TOMORROW! WE'RE FLYING DOWN... IN THE COMPANY'S PRIVATE PLANE!



AND SO, THE NEXT DAY, A SMALL FOUR-SEATER TAKES OFF FROM THE AIRPORT JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY... BOUND FOR LA P.S., CAPITOL OF SOLLIVIA...

POOR MORGAN! HE ALWAYS LOVED TO FLY WITH US! TOO BAD HE HAD TO MISS THIS TRIP!

HEH, HEH! YES! TOO BAD!



A WEEK LATER, THE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY'S PLANE IS WINNING ITS WAY SOUTH OVER THE ANDES MOUNTAINS...

NORTH OF LAKE TITICACA ON THE PERU-SOLIVIAN BORDER, THE TINY PLANE RUNS INTO A STORM.

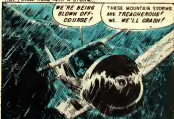
WE OUGHT TO REACH LA PAZ BEFORE NIGHT FALL!

LOOK AT THOSE MOUNTAINS DOWN THERE! AREN'T THEY BEAUTIFUL!



WE'RE BEING BLOWN OFF-COURSE!

THESE MOUNTAIN STORMS ARE TREACHEROUS! WE... WE'LL CRASH!



THE STORM LASHES AT THE AIR-PLANE, TORNING IT LIKE A FEATHER.

THE MOUNTAIN-TOP LOOKS UP BEFORE THE PLANE! WAGNER STRUGGLES WITH THE CONTROLS.

THE THREE MEN IN THE PLANE STRAIN THEIR EYES, TRYING TO PIERCE THE GATHERING GLOOM! SUDDENLY, AS A BOLT OF LIGHTNING FLASHES...

IT'S GETTING DARK! I CAN HARDLY SEE!

LOOK-OUT! THAT MOUNTAIN-TOP!



I CAN'T GET ANY ALTITUDE! WE'LL HAVE TO TRY GOING AROUND!



WE'RE FLYING BETWEEN TWO MOUNTAINS! GET UP HIGHER! GET UP HIGHER!

I CAN'T! I CAN'T!



THE SHOCK THROWS THE THREE MEN FORWARD! FOR A MOMENT, THE TINY PLANE VIBRATES CRAZILY.

WAGNER PEERS OUT OF THE WINDOW! AS THE LIGHTNING FLASHES ONCE MORE, HE SCREAMS...

WHAT... HAPPENED?

WE HIT SOMETHING!

BUT... BUT WE DIDN'T CRASH!



WE'RE STILL BETWEEN THOSE TWO MOUNTAINS! WE'RE JUST HANGING IN MID-AIR!

WHAT? YOU'RE RIGHT!



SOON, THE STORM SUBSIDES! ELLIS TAKES A FLASHLIGHT AND OPENS THE PLANE DOOR...

LOOK! THE PLANE IS CAUGHT ON THESE CABLES!

BE CAREFUL! YOU'LL FALL!



ELLIS CLIMBS FROM THE TINY CRAFT... ONTO THE CABLE-LIKE STRUCTURE...

IT'S SOME SORT OF A NETWORK! I'M GOING TO CLIMB DOWN!

NO, ELLIS! WAIT TILL DAYLIGHT! YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW HIGH UP WE ARE!



BUT ELLIS DOES NOT LISTEN! HE STARTS DOWN THE CABLE NETWORK! SOON, ONLY THE GLOW OF HIS FLASHLIGHT CAN BE SEEN.

SUDDENLY THE FLASHLIGHT-SLOW BLANKS OUT, AND THE NIGHT IS FILLED WITH A BLOOD-CURDLING CAMEL OF HORROR...

FROM INSIDE THEIR PLANE, WAGNER AND BUCKLEY STARE INTO THE DARKNESS...

ELLIS! COME BACK! YOU CRAZY FOOL!



ELLIS!

GOOD LORD!

WHAT... WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM? HE MUST HAVE FALLEN!

NO! HIS SCREAM DIDN'T FASE AWAY! IT WAS CUT SHORT! HE... HE SAW SOMETHING!



AS DAWN BREAKS WHEN THE ANDES, WAGNER AND BUCKLEY BEHOLD A STRANGE AND TERRIFYING SIGHT! THEIR TINY PLANE HANGS ENTWINED IN THE STRANGE CABLE-NETWORK, HALFWAY BETWEEN THE SHEER SIDES OF TWO MOUNTAINS AND HIGH OVER THE VALLEY FLOOR...

LOOK! WE CAN CLIMB TO SAFETY! IT REACHES THE MOUNTAIN SIDES.

WAIT, BUCKLEY!



BUCKLEY MOVES OUT OVER THE CABLE NETWORK! WAGNER HURDS BACK, A SENSATION OF TERROR COULING DOWN HIS SPINE.

O'ROG, WAGNER! YOU CAN'T STAY THERE TILL YOU STARVE!

I... I DON'T KNOW! I... I... OH, MY LORD...



THE GIANTIC HAIRY THING BARTS DOWN THE NETWORK FROM BEYOND THE MOUNTAIN RIDGE! ITS EIGHT HUGE SPINY LEGS CARRY IT AT A BREATHTAKING SPEED! WARNER SCREAMS...

WARNER SCAMPERS BACK INTO THE TRAPPED FLAME AND SLAMS THE DOOR! FROM A WINDOW HE WATCHES AS THE GIANT CRAWLING THING REACHES BUCKLY.

BUCKLY! LOOK OUT! IT'S A GIANT SPIDER!

AAAAAAEEEE!



OH, LORD! IT'S DEVOURING HIM!

BUCKLY'S HYSTERICAL SHRIERS OF PAIN FINALLY SUBSIDE! THE HUGE SPIDER TURNS AND MOVED TOWARD THE FLAME...

THE GIANT SPIDER CROUCHES OVER THE TRY FLAME...WAITING FOR ITS TERRIFIED OCCUPANT TO EMERGE! IT WAITS PATIENTLY... HOUR AFTER HOUR...

NOW...NOW, IT...IT'S COMING TO GET ME!

I...I'M TRAPPED! TRAPPED! IT'S JUST SITTING THERE... WAITING FOR ME...



BACK IN THE UNITED STATES, THE WARDEN AND THE DOCTOR STARE DOWN AT DONALD MORGAN? HE SITS IN THE CORNER OF HIS CELL... MUTTERING...

WHILE HIGH IN THE ANDES, MORGAN'S EX-BUSINESS ASSOCIATE IS SUFFERING THE SAME FATE? HE, TOO, IS OUT OF HIS MIND...

REN, REN? YEP? SO AFTER WARNER, ELLIS AND BUCKLY TRAPPED MORGAN IN A WEB OF EVIDENCE, THEY WERE TRAPPED IN ONE THEMSELVES... A REAL WEB. THAT IS? I SUPPOSE YOU'RE WONDERING IF A SPIDER LIKE THAT REALLY EXISTS? WELL, NEXT TIME YOU SEE A LOCAL SPIDER...ASK IT IF IT EVER HEARD OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN MOUNTAIN DRAWLER? IT'LL PROBABLY GURGL UP AND DIE AT THE MERE MENTION OF ITS NAME? "EYE, NOW!"

HE'S BEYOND HOPE, WARDEN! A COMPLETE MENTAL BREAKDOWN!

STIR UP A COMPLETE MENTAL BREAKDOWN!



TH...TH...TH... SPIDER...EH... WAITING...EH... FOR ME...EH...EH



E.C. FANS!

**UNDOUBTEDLY THE ZANZIEST
10¢ WORTH OF IDIOTIC
NONSENSE YOU COULD EVER
HOPE TO BUY! TRY IT...
JUST FOR LAUGHS!**



**ANOTHER
"NEW TREND"
SURE-FIRE WINNER!**



**ON SALE NOW
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!**

CURSE!

Ramsy squeezed the trigger and felt the pistol buck violently in his hand. The young native guide in front of him spun around and crashed headlong into the heavy foliage.

"I don't need him any longer," Ramsy muttered as he slipped his gun back into its holster and stepped around the body sprawled beside the crude trail. "Now that he's revealed the hiding place of his peegles' treasure, I can go the rest of the way myself. As soon as I crack open the tomb where these superstitious savages buried their loot, a fortune in diamonds and rubies is mine!"

3 hours later... 3 grueling hours of incessant hacking through the matted underbrush... Ramsy staggered into a grassy clearing. Before him, rising grey and ominous as the guide had predicted, towered the mountain where the treasure of Malakko Island was hidden. A half-million dollars, intended as a sacrifice to primitive gods, was sealed up in these rocks!

The fatigue of the long trek from the coast... the painful lunging over razor-backed ridges and through evilly-sucking swamps... was forgotten by Ramsy in that moment of ecstasy. Here... somewhere along the base of this craggy mountain... was the secret entrance to a sacrificial chamber which housed a king's ransom!

The sun had begun fading when Ramsy found the cryptic designs carved into the stone. A warning, the

guide had whispered, that doom awaited anyone who dared invade the sanctity of the mountain! The only one who's perished because of that fool curse, Ramsey sneered, was the guide, himself!

In a few minutes he had jammed a dozen sticks of dynamite into fissures beside the sealed entrance. From a distance, protected by a huge boulder, Ramsey heard the shattering blast and saw tons of rock shower in every direction. When the dust had settled he raced toward the gaping hole now revealed in the mountain's side... even from this distance he could see the glimmer of precious stones within the tomb. It was all his...

A deep rumble made him stop in his tracks. The ground began to tremble wildly... far above, the mountaintop was disintegrating before his eyes! Flames leaped madly toward the clouds... hissing black lava gushed torrentially down upon him...

Before Ramsey, in his terror, could see across the grassy clearing, the searing liquid was upon him. Like fiery tar it bubbled around his legs, searing the tortured skin and tearing it loose in raw shreds. Pain stabbed instantly through his body, from head to toe... he felt stifling heat filling his agonized lungs, choking his breath in his throat.

The treasure... a thought flickered through his brain as he felt himself dissolving in that blanketting sea of molten lava... buried in the side of a VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN! Dynamite... activated it...

The scorching lava rolled on, and in its midst Ramsey's body turned molten hot... simmered and spit like meat boiled in a blast-furnace...



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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

So, now you know! So maybe my two idiot editors won't be commanding large portions of my column any more to make some ridiculous announcement about E.C. a latent money grubbing idiot! A couple of pages back, you probably saw the cover of the first issue of the most recent addition to the *YC*, *crash bang!* MAD, they call it! You'd be MAD if you *BOUGHT* it! Of all the maddening things, this new mag is actually FUNNY... *choko!* How disgusting can one get? When I reluctantly agreed to be typped up with this massable confab, and allowed my Tales from the Crypt to be published in the form of comic magazines, I never in my gormless daydreams dreamed that I would be in any way associated with funny-type magazines! Imagine a "comic" being COMIC! (Star C.K. There's a HORROR story in "MAD"? —ed.) Who sells it? Does V.K. sell it? Does O.W. tell it? DO I TELL IT? WHO TELLS IT? (Harvey Kattman tells it! —ed.) THERE! THAT'S WHAT I MEAN! What does that WAR MONGER know about HORROR? Where does POW, S.A. BLAMM, WHOOSH Kattman come off writing horror stories? (Star this is different, C.K. This is a FUNNY horror story! Why, we nearly died! —ed.) NEARLY, eh? Die the lack! And anyway, who ever heard of a FUNNY HORROR story? (Star C.K. Your boy, Jack Davis, does it! —ed.) THERE! THAT'S WHAT I MEAN! What does... WHO? (Jack Davis? —ed.) JACK... oh... DAVIS! MY son BOY? (There, there, C.K. No more! —ed.) How low could he do this to me! (Sample! We offered him MONEY! —ed.) RUINING HIM... THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE DOING... RUINING HIM! DEAD BODIES AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH? PICKLED WEREWOLF KNUCKLES AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH? VAMPIRE GHOULASH (HUNGARIAN STYLE) ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH? You have to spell him with MONEY! (You do however your way... we'll do however our way! —ed.) I QUIT! (Now, how? The CONTRACT? Remember? —ed.) Humph! (That's better! Now go on with your column! —ed.) Ah, yes! The column! Well, let's look at some mail!

Dear Crypt Keeper,

I suppose by now you've discovered the mistake you made in Tales from the Crypt No. 30, and have received hundreds of corrective letters. But in case you haven't, you *and* that gold robbery called around the Cape of Good Hope a kind of in Africa, when you obviously meant Cape Horn in South America.

E. Kennaway
N. Bergen, N.J.

In your last story, I found a big mistake. It said, "...water hungry citizens'd take dapper dips, rising the Cape of Good Hope in' broken up..." Of course the fact that the Cape of Good Hope is in Africa shouldn't matter much, except that they would

have landed in India. Most of them didn't go around Cape Horn anyway! They went to the leftward of Panama, crossed on foot to the other side, and got a boat which was waiting for them.

James Hayden
Yonkers, N.Y.

In "Ghostly Payments" you wrote that the gold robbers went around the Cape of Good Hope. This facility seems possible now and was in at the maritime riot of Africa. Was this a misprint or a geographical error?

David A.V. Vandorak
Dubuque, Iowa

All right, already! So I wrote a letter! So what's so what? (Should have gone geographer! Besides, my idiot editors should have caught the mistake!) (2) We should have gone geographer! —ed.) (I know geographer! —Harvey Kattman) WAR MONGER!

Dear Crypt Keeper,

Probably you didn't think your horror stories would strike long readers across the Atlantic to scare themselves like me over here in England. May I take this opportunity to say that you are the best horror and terror writer I've ever read. I do hope that your little encyclopedia of horror (your magazines) keep expanding to cover these ghastly way over here, if only to keep me entertained.

Alan Greenall
London, England

Hiway! It's cool in Hades today, by love, and all that sort of cool. It's been truly warm from you. AL, old boy!

Dear Crypt Keeper,

Your stories are the most thrilling, the most repulsive, the most disgusting stories I have ever read. When I read your magazine, I get out to my stomach. I'm not alone in this opinion. All my friends think the same thing. Keep up the good work.

Wynne Gilbert
Wheatport, Ohio

My friends think so too, Matt!

Dear C.K.,

I would be most pleased if you would send me the set of photographs I've devoted to and to all, and that's the good, old way I love. Enclosed is the postal for required. Gratefully

Edwin Hammarley
San Francisco, Cal.

For any of you other grateful readers who are looking for a way out, be advised that for by seven autographed photographic reproductions of V.K., O.W., and myself are still available... and will be for some time! So there's no rush! Mail your quarter or envelope! Few hundred copies of Tales of Terror lying around too. Likewise two last Subscriptions... all year... all time... all time... In the coin of the realm do you wish help! Send complaints, compliments, postage orders, T. of T. orders, subscription orders, and cheer orders (make us one on you!) too.

The Crypt Keeper
Room 106, Dept. 32
215 Lafayette St.
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

READ OF THE STARK HORROR
TWO MEN FOUND IN A GAME OF
**CUTTING
CARDS!**



THIS STORY IS PROBABLY THE MOST HORRIBLE, BLOOD-CURDLING TALE YOU WILL EVER READ! IT CONCERNS TWO PROFESSIONAL GAMBLERS... BUS FORNEY AND LOU OREBIS! GAMBLERS... BIG-TIME GAMBLERS LIKE BUS AND LOU... ARE IN A CLASS BY THEMSELVES! GAMBLING IS THEIR LIFE! THE WAGER THE BET... IS THEIR BLOOD! BUT BUS FORNEY AND LOU OREBIS HATED EACH OTHER... HATED EACH OTHER LIKE POISON...

I MEAN THERE ISN'T ENOUGH ROOM IN THIS WHOLE WORLD FOR BOTH OF US, LOU! AND I'M WILLIN' TO GAMBLE TO SEE WHO LEAVES IT!

YOU'RE BLEFFING, BUS! DRAW! YOU'RE OR! SHALL WE DRAW? HIGH CARD BONE? THE LOSER BIES! THE GEORGE OF METHOD IS WISE!

THERE ISN'T ENOUGH ROOM IN THIS TOWN FOR BOTH OF US, LOU!

I'M NOT LEAVING, BUS! SO, GOOD-BYE... GET ON YOUR HORSE...





GUS STARED DOWN AT THE CARDS FANNED OUT BEFORE HIM! THE ODDS WERE SIXTEEN TO ONE AGAINST HIS PICKING ONE OF THE THREE REMAINING ACES! HE SPUN A CARD OVER...



GUS TOOK HIS REVOLVER FROM THE DRAWER AND REMOVED ALL BUT ONE BULLET FROM ITS SIX CHAMBERS...



LOU TOOK THE SIX-SHOT REVOLVER AND TWIRLED THE CHAMBER...





GUS HANDED THE GUN TO LOU! LOU PLACED THE MUZZLE AGAINST HIS HEAD? GOGS NOW... FOUR TO ONE...



GUS TOOK THE GUN! BEADS OF PERSPIRATION BEGAN TO POP OUT ON THE TWO GAMBLERS' FACES? GUS POINTED THE REVOLVER? GOGS... THREE TO ONE...



LOU TOOK THE GUN! THERE WERE THREE SHOTS LEFT NOW! ONE OF THEM HAD THAT BULLET! GOGS... TWO TO ONE...



LOU SIGHED IN RELIEF AND MOPPED HIS BROW! GUS'S HAND SHOOK A LITTLE AS HE RAISED THE GUN? HE HESITATED? IT WAS EVEN MORE NOW! HIS FINGER TWITCHED... THEN CLOSED...



GUS GRINNED! LOU STARED AT THE GUN! THE GOGS HAD RUN OUT! THE BULLET WAS LEFT! GUS HANDED THE WEAPON OVER...



LOW LIFTED THE GUN AND STEERED HIMSELF FOR THE DEATH BLOW AS THE BULLET CAME CRASHING INTO HIS BRAIN! HE SQUEEZED THE TRIGGER...



WHAT? IT DIDN'T GO OFF!

A... A DUD? WHY, YOU DIRTY SOB! YOU KNEW IT ALL THE TIME! THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED TO GO FIRST! YOU THOUGHT I'D CRASH!



DON'T BE AN IDIOT, LOW! YOU TWIRLED THE CHAMBER! HOW DID I KNOW IT WOULD COME UP LAST?

YOU CAN'T TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS ONE, GUY! NO MATTER WHEN IT CAME UP, YOU HAD A SORE THING!



ARE YOU ACCUSING ME... GUY FORNER... OF CHEATING?

YOU CAN HEAR! LUCKY I'M AN HONEST GAMBLER WHO'S NEVER HAD TO GOING OUT! BUT I NEVER WELSH WHEN I LOSE!

OKAY, GUY... IF YOU'RE SUCH A BIG-SHOT GAMBLER, THEN YOU'LL ACCEPT MY CHALLENGE!

YOU SEE NAME IT?



NOBODY CALLS GUY FORNER A GREAT! GUY... I CHALLENGE YOU TO A GAME OF CHOP-POKER!

OKAY, YOU GUY... YOU'RE ON!



TO A FINISH!

TO A FINISH! CALL YOUR DOCTOR! I'LL GET MINE!



THEN, FIELDS, BEGAN THE MOST HORRIBLE CARD GAME IN THE HISTORY OF MODERN GAMBLING! YOU'VE HEARD OF STRIP POKER? WELL, **CRAP** POKER IS ALMOST LIKE THAT! ONLY INSTEAD OF LOSING AN ARTICLE OF CLOTHING... YOU LOSE A **LIFE!** CRAP POKER HAD BEEN PLAYED BEFORE... IT WAS TOLD... BUT ONLY **ONE** HAD AT A TIME! NEVER... TO A **FINISH!**



THEY SAT AT THE GREEN FELT-COVERED TABLE BENEATH THE GLARING LAMP! THE HEAT SLEEVER SPARKLED BETWEEN THEM! GUS DEALT THE CARDS...



I GOT **THREE** FENS, LOU!
SORRY GUS! **THREE** LADIES!



LOU PICKED UP THE SLEEVER AND STOOD OVER GUS...



GUS STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND! HIS PERSONAL DOCTOR MOVED FORWARD INTO THE LIGHT! LOU RAISED THE SLEEVER AND BROUGHT IT DOWN...



IT WAS LIKE A FRENCH DUEL! THE DOCTORS WERE THE **SECONDS!** TIME WAS TAKEN OUT WHILE GUS'S SECOND SERVICED HIM! THE BARBASS WAS BLOTTED RED WHEN THEY BEGAN AGAIN...



LOU DEALT THE CARDS! THEY DISCARDED... THEN...



GUS PICKED UP THE CLEAVER IN HIS GOOD HAND!
LOU'S SECOND MOVED INTO THE LAMPLIGHT—



AGAIN TIME WAS TAKEN OUT WHILE LOU'S SECOND
SERVICED HIM! SOON, THE CARDS WERE SHUFFLED
ONCE MORE...



LOU STRETCHED OUT HIS LEFT HAND! GUS TOOK
CAREFUL AIM...



HEH, HEH! YEP, KIDDIES! THAT'S HOW THE GAME WAS
PLAYED! IT CONTINUED ON LIKE THAT... FAR INTO
THE NIGHT! AS EACH HAND WAS PLAYED AND WON...



BUT LOU AND HIS NEVER DID
PLAY CHOP POKEE TO A
FINISH! OH, YEA! THEY PLAYED
ALL NIGHT AND INTO THE NEXT
DAY! BUT THEY HAD TO QUIT
TOWARDS EVENING! SEEMS THAT
NEITHER OF THEM COULD
DEAL THE CARDS!



WHAT? YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME? WELL... LET'S LOOK IN ON THIS
HOSPITAL ROOM! LOU AND GUS ARE IN THERE... STILL GAMBLING...



THE
END

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

PEANUTS, POPCORN... HEI, HEI! YEP, IT'S YOUR FEEDER OF FOUL FABLES... THE OLD WITCH... COOKIN' AGAIN! GOT A CIRCUS RECIPE FOR YOU THIS TIME! ELEPHANT STEAK BARNISHED WITH CRUSHED TAMBARK! I GOT THE IDEA FROM THE STORY I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU! I CALL THIS BARBLED BRABBLING OF BORE...

SQUASH... ANYONE?

FOR A MOMENT, THE CROWD UNDER THE BIG-TOE HAT DEATHLY SILENT! THEN, FROM THE BARBOARD, A DRUM BEGAN TO ROLL... ITS SHINING STACCOES OF ANTICIPATION GROWING LOUDER AND LOUDER! IN THE CENTER OF THE RING, THE HARE ELEPHANT LIFTED A MASSIVE FORELEAF! THE SCANTILY CLAD WOMAN RECOILED ON THE TAMBARK FLOOR! THE ELEPHANT TRAINER MARKED ORDERS! THE RING-MASTER ANNOUNCED...

AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FOR THE MOST DEATH-DEFYING FEAT EVER PRESENTED UNDER THE BIG-TOE...



THE WOMAN WHISPERED UNDER THE MAMMOTH UPRAISED FOOT OF THE ELEPHANT! THE TRAINER SHOUTED ABOVE THE DRUM-ROLL'S RISING CROSSBOW! THE ELEPHANT TRUMPETED, CURLING ITS TRUNK...



EIGHT THOUSAND POUNDS... LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! ONE SLIP... AND IT MEANS CERTAIN DEATH! WATCH!

THE GIRL STARED UP AT THE HUGE HOOF! SHE WAS DIRECTLY OVER HER FACE! THE TRAINER BARRIED AN ORDER! THE GOLIATH LOWERED ITS UPRAISED FORELEGS! THE DRUM-ROLL THUNDERED...



THE ELEPHANT HOOF TOUCHED THE WOMAN'S NOSE! A CRYAL CRASHED!



THE TRAINER AND THE GIRL BOWED AGAIN AND AGAIN! THE CROWD CHEERED...



THE ELEPHANT ACT WAS OVER! THE CIRCUS BAND STRUCK UP A HAPPY MARCH! AND THE CLOWNS SWIFT OUT ACROSS THE ARENA! THE TRAINER AND THE GIRL DISAPPEARED THROUGH THE EXIT-WAY...



WELL, RENÉ! DIDN'T YOU THINK THEY APPLAUDED MORE THAN USUAL, TO-NIGHT?

THE COUPLE MOVED ACROSS THE CIRCUS GROUNDS TO A TRAILER! THE LETTERS PAINTED UPON IT WERE BIG AND IMPRESSIVE! 'WILD WORLD'S GREATEST ELEPHANT TRAINER!'



HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO RIDE INTO TOWN TONIGHT, WILD?

NOT TONIGHT, RENÉ! I'M TIRED!

THE INSIDE OF THE TRAILER WAS CROWDED AND MESSY! COLORFUL COSTUMES LAY SCATTERED ABOUT! BOOKS AND MAGAZINES SPRAWLED ON EVERY AVAILABLE SURFACE...



NOT ADMIRING? NOT JEALOUS? THAT'S ALL I CARE! WELL, I'M NOT STAYING AROUND NIGHT AFTER NIGHT... NOT IN THIS DUMP!

I'M NOT STOPPING YOU FROM GOING INTO TOWN, RENÉ!

THE WOMAN SLIPPED OUT OF HER COUNTY COSTUME AND INTO A STREET-DRESS.

A NEED OF A MARRIAGE
DOOR? IS IT I MIGHT AS WELL
BE MARRIED TO YOUR
ELEPHANT!

THEN
FORGIVE
ME,
RENÉ!

OH, NO! NOT THAT
EASY, BIG BOY!
YOU'RE STUCK
WITH ME! I'D
NEVER GIVE
YOU A DIVORCE
WITHOUT A FIGHT!
IT'S COST YOU
PLENTY...

OHAY, RENÉ!
OHAY!
WE'VE BEEN
ALL THROUGH
THIS BEFORE!

RENÉ SLAMMED THE DOOR OF
THE TRAILER IN ANGER AS SHE
LEFT FROM BEYOND. IN THE
SHADOWS, A FIGURE WATCHED HER
ENTER THE CAR...



AS SOON AS RENÉ'D DRIVEN OFF, THE FIGURE
MOVED OUT OF THE SHADOWS! IT WAS A WOMAN!
SHE BARTERED TOWARD MILD'S TRAILER.

LEETA! DARLING!

OH, MILD!

THEY CLUNG TO EACH OTHER FOR A FEW MOMENTS!
THEN...

DID YOU FEEL
HEARTABOUT ME?

NO! IT'S NO USE! SHE'S NEVER
GIVE ME A DIVORCE! I KNOW!
WE'LL HAVE TO RUN AWAY!



LEETA LOOKED AT MILD! A FLASH OF EVIL GLISTENED
IN HER TEMPERAMENTOUS EYES.

WHAT... WHAT IF THERE
WERE A FEROUS ACCIDENT?
WHAT IF NAME WERE KILLED?

LEETA!
WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?

EMMA COULD SLEEP, MY
DARLING! DON'T YOU SEE
HOW EASY IT COULD BE?

NOT EMMA
WOULD NOT SLEEP!
SHE'S WELL
TRAINED! SHE
WOULD NOT PUT
HER FOOT DOWN
UNTIL I DISABLED
HER.





AND IF YOU DAD SIGNAL HER?

IT... IT WOULD BE MURDER... LEEZA!

EXACTLY, MY DARLING! AND NO ONE WOULD EVER KNOW! YOU COULD GET SHOOKED... BLAME IT ON EMMA... CLAIM THAT SHE OBEYED YOU...

I'D HAVE TO HAVE HER SHOT!

YOU COULD TRAIN ANOTHER, MY DARLING! NEW WIFE... NEW ELEPHANT... A WHOLE NEW LIFE FOR YOU...

I... I DON'T KNOW! I JUST DON'T KNOW...

LEEZA'S EYES BURNED! HER FACE DARKENED...

IT'S TRUE, ON ME, WILD! I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR THIS... THIS SECRET MEETING NONSENSE! I WANT YOU... ALL THE TIME... OR NOT AT ALL!

GIVE ME A CHANCE TO THINK IT OVER, LEEZA! PLEASE!

LEEZA SMILED! SHE PURSED HER LIPS... RUNNING HER HAND THROUGH WILD'S HAIR...

OF COURSE, MY DARLING! TILL TOMORROW NIGHT'S PERFORMANCE... AND... IF IT DOESN'T HAPPEN THEN...

LEEZA! BABY...



THE NEXT EVENING, WILD AND RENE STOOD IN THE ENTRANCE... WAS TO THE BIG TOP, AWAITING THEIR CUE... MUSIC, EMMA TRUMPETED SOFTLY! SHE SEEMED TO SENSE THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG...

THERE, THERE, GIRL! EMMA SINGS MERRYBONES TONIGHT, WILD!

SHE'S ALL RIGHT... C'MON! THERE'S OUR CUE!

THE FANFARE BLENDED THE CROWD! THE RING-MASTER INTRODUCED THE ACT AS THE SPOT-LIGHT SWUNG TO THE BOWING PERFORMERS...

AND NOW... WILD, THE GREATEST ELEPHANT TRAINER IN THE WORLD... AND HIS WONDER-ELEPHANT, EMMA, ASSIGNED BY THAT DEATH-DEFFING BEAUTY... RENE...



THE DRUM BEGAN ITS ANXIOUS ROLL ONCE MORE! WILD BARRIED AN ORDER AND EMMA LIFTED HER FOOT! BARE, HOT DOWN ON THE RING-FLOOR AND GRISSELED BELOW IT...



THE THUNDER OF THE ROLLING DRUM GREW LOUDER AND LOUDER! EMMA'S HOOF PLUNG MENACINGLY ABOVE RENE'S WHITE FACE! WILD BARRIED AN ORDER AND THE HUGE FOOT LOWERED SLOWLY...



FOR A MOMENT, EMMA'S GIANTIC HOOF TOUCHED RENE'S WHITE FACE! THE DRUM ROLL REACHED ITS CRESENDO...



AS THE SYMBOL CRASHED, WILD SCREAMED AT EMMA! RENE SCREAMED!



THE SCREAM CAME TOO LATE! EMMA WAS WELL-TRAINED AND RESPONDED IMMEDIATELY! WILD WATCHED IN HORROR AS EIGHT THOUSAND FOWNS DESCENDED ON RENE'S FEAR-TWISTED FACE.



EMMA TRAMPED ON LOYALLY! SHE BEAMED UP... CRISTEN! FOR A MOMENT, THE STARED AUDIENCE WAS GROCED BY THE VERY SCENE! THEN SOMEONE YARRIED... PANDEMONIUM BROKE LOOSE! WILD HOLLERED HARSHLY.



TWO WARRIORS RUSHED FORWARD! THEY FIRED AT THE RED-EYED PANDYBORN. SMYTTEN THEIR GUNS INTO HER TIGHT HAIR! THE CROWD SCREAMED AND SHOUTED, AS IT LOOKED FOR THE FALLO.



EMMA SWAYED AND TOPPLED OVER ON HER SIDE... DEAD! THE CIRCUS BAND BLARED IN DISCORD, ATTEMPTING TO RESTORE ORDER! THE KING-MASTER RUSHED TO WILD AS HE STARED DOWN AT RENE'S CRUSHED REMAINS IN MUTTERED REVOLUTION...

SOBT... SOBT LOOK AT HER MILD! IT... IT'S HORRIBLE!

RENE! SOB RENE!



THEY LED WILD TO THE EXIT-WAY HE WAS SOBBERING SOFTLY! BUT THAT NIGHT... FAR FROM THE CIRCUS GROUNDS... HE AND LEETA LAUGHED TOGETHER...

IT WAS SO SIMPLE, DARLING! SO SIMPLE!

I TOLD YOU, MILD! I TOLD YOU IT WOULD BE!



WILD WAS FREE NOW... FREE OF RENE FOREVER! HE AND LEETA MADE PLANS...

WE'LL WANT A FEW MONTHS... JUST TO MAKE IT LOOK GOOD... AND THEN WE'LL BE MARRIED!

AND I'LL BEGIN TRAINING ANOTHER ELEPHANT!

FROM NOW ON, IT'S SMOOTH SAILING FOR US, MILD!

C'MERE, BABY!



IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR WILD TO TRAIN A NEW ELEPHANT TO TAKE EMMA'S PLACE! WITHIN A YEAR THE ACT WAS AGAIN THRILLING AUDIENCES...

... WILD... WITH HIS WONDER-ELEPHANT, BESSIE, ASSISTED BY THAT DEATH-DEFYING BEAUTY... LEETA!



THE CIRCUS RETURNED TO THE TOWN WHERE THE HORRIBLE 'ACCIDENT' HAD HAPPENED ONE YEAR PREVIOUSLY! THE NIGHT OF THE OPENING PERFORMANCE, WILD AND LEETA STOOD BESIDE BESSIE, AWAITING THEIR CUE...

I'LL BE GLAD WHEN THIS WEEK IS OVER AND I DON'T WE LEAVE THIS BIRD! ABOUT HERE IS BORNED RENE! AND EMMA... DARLING!



THE OLD FANFARE BLARED! THE SPOT-LIGHT DRUNG TO THE ENTRANCE-WAY TO PICK THEM UP! A DISTANT DRILL TRUMPETING SOUNDED.

STEADY, BESSIE, BABY!

DEE? THAT WASN'T BESSIE, WILD? I... I...



THE LOW RUMBLING THAT ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT DID NOT COME FROM THE SAND-CASTLE? A GIGANT DARTED ACROSS THE ARENA, SCREAMING...

I SAW THEM... WILD!
I SAW THEM! WHAT
OF ITS



IT BURST THROUGH THE EXIT-WAY ACROSS THE TARBARK FLOOR! IT TRUMPETED SHRELLY! THE STERCH FILLED THE BIG-TOPI! ITS ROILING HIDE PELL AWAY IN SLIMY GLOOD AS IT MOVED! HERE AND THERE, WHITERED BONES PROTRAINED THROUGH ITS MASSOO-COVERED FLESH! PERCHED ON THE REMAINS OF ITS HEAD SAT THE DECAYED FIGURE OF A WOMAN, URSSING IT ON...

EMMA...AND RENÉ!



IT LUNGED TOWARD THE HORRIFIED TRADER AND HIS NEW WIFE... THE THING, ITS HEAD POINTING WILDLY...



IT WAS TOO LATE FOR WILD TO MOVE... TOO LATE TO RUN! THE THING WAS UPON HIM... LIFTING HIM IN ITS PAUL-SMELLING, DECOMPOSING TRUMP! LECTA WAS CAUGHT BENEATH ONE OF ITS HUGE ROTTED HOOPS.

EEEEEEEEEE... AAAAAAAA...



WILD WAS FLUNG TO THE TARBARK WITH THE FORCE OF A TWENTY-STORY FALL! LECTA WAS CRUSHED FLAT.



THEN, AS THE SCREAMS SUBSIDED AND DEATH CAME TO WILD AND LECTA, THE HUGE THING AND THE HUMAN-THING UPON IT SEEMED TO JUST PULL AWAY INTO A PILE OF PUTRESCENT SLIME.



PEANUTS, POPCORN, PUTRESCENT SLIME! HEY, LADY! BUY YER BRAT A BAG OF PUTRESCENT SLIME! HEY HEY! YEP! THAT'S M'WALE, RIDGES! HERE, AND EMMA GOT THEIR REVENGE, AND WILD AND LECTA GOT THEIR FOOD! BY THE WAY I'M SELLING COTTON-GANDY! GOT A WHOLE FRONK-FAL! HEY HEY! WHAT ROTTEN-BASTARD STUFF! BYE, NOW WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT-KEEPER'S HALL, THE HALLS OF HORROR!



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DOUBLE-SIZED FIRST ISSUE!



NO. 1



JULY

TALES FROM THE CRYPT



FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH

ENOCH



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THAT WRETCH, THE VAULT-KEEPER, HAS SABOTAGED THIS ISSUE OF TALES FROM THE CRYPT BECAUSE I GOT MY NAG ON THE NEWSSTANDS BEFORE HIS VAULT OF HORROR! HE CREEPT INTO THE PRINT SHOP THE NIGHT BEFORE WE WENT TO PRESS AND SWITCHED AROUND PAGES 5 AND 6 OF WILL ELDER'S STORY... TWO FOR THE SHOW JUST TO CONFUSE YOU READERS AND MAKE ME MAD! BUT SINCE WE PRINT THE COVERS LAST, I FOUND OUT IN TIME TO WARN YOU! ONCE HE'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THIS I'M GONNA TAKE ONE OF HIS RAGS AND—HEH, HEH—GET EVEN! JUST WAIT!

THAT WRETCH, THE VAULT-KEEPER, HAS SABOTAGED THIS ISSUE OF TALES FROM THE CRYPT BECAUSE I GOT MY NAG ON THE NEWSSTANDS BEFORE HIS VAULT OF HORROR! HE CREEPT INTO THE PRINT SHOP THE NIGHT BEFORE WE WENT TO PRESS AND SWITCHED AROUND PAGES 5 AND 6 OF WILL ELDER'S STORY... TWO FOR THE SHOW JUST TO CONFUSE YOU READERS AND MAKE ME MAD! BUT SINCE WE PRINT THE COVERS LAST, I FOUND OUT IN TIME TO WARN YOU! ONCE HE'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THIS I'M GONNA TAKE ONE OF HIS RAGS AND—HEH, HEH—GET EVEN! JUST WAIT!

This Issue's Credits

From *Tales From the Crypt* 33 (1952).

Front cover by Jack Davis.

"Lower Berth," art by Jack Davis.

"This 'Bick'll Kill You," art by George Evans and Jack Kamen.

"Grim Fairy Tale," art by Jack Kamen.

"None but the Lonely Heart," art by Graham Ingels.

From *Crime Suspense* 17 (1953).

"Touch and Go," art by Johnny Craig, adapted from a story by Ray Bradbury.

"One for the Money," art by Jack Kamen.

"Fired," art by Al Williamson and Frank Frazetta.

"Two for the Show," art by Bill Elder.

All stories colored by Marie Severin.

DREADFUL PLEASURES

by Jim Twitchell

Horror art is not, strictly speaking, a genre; it is rather a collection of motifs in a usually predictable sequence that gives us a specific physiological effect—the shivers. As the Fat Boy said in Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*, "I want to make your skin crawl."

We do not have to know what is going on to be affected. An audience, in fact, may search for artificial horror without much intellectual explanation or sophistication. The art demands audience participation or, better yet, conspiracy: like children huddled around the campfire asking for "just one more scary story."

No one has ever tracked the major carriers of horror—the vampire, the werewolf, and the "hulk with no name"—from their lairs in the subconscious, up through folklore, into the printed text of *Dracula*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Frankenstein*. From them came a veritable jungle of cinematic monsters.

Critics have uniformly neglected the word they so readily invoke—horror. It is a difficult word primarily because we think we know what it means: what is horrible is what we are frightened of. Give any journeyman moviemaker a razor and a young lady, or lumbering beast and a shrieking ingenue, and he should be able to scare the wits out of any audience. This is true as far as it goes, but horror really refers to a rather specific effect of that fright. To understand the meaning of

"horror" we are initially taken back to the latin word *horrens*, which means "to bristle," and it describes the way the hair stands on end during moments of shivering excitement. From this comes creeping flesh or, more simply, the "creeps." Hence both real and artificial horror—such as in *Tales From the Crypt*—offer a moment of ecstatic dread, a second of full-passioned fixity, of panic and exultation. The experience is commonly known as gooseflesh. What we call gooseflesh is usually caused by abrupt changes in body temperature and is the warm-blooded animal's attempt to shove up its thermostat. Our teeth chatter, knees knock, and skin shivers. We stand still and shudder, suddenly paralyzed.

At the height of horror we **must** scream or the tension, the pressure inside us, will cause us to go **insane!**

Terror, as differentiated from horror, must start anew in each generation, not because the objects we fear are so changeable, but because the images of them are. We now don't fear space invaders; we fear what we might bring back from space. A generation from now there will be a different "terror in the aisles." But horror is different. We will keep returning to watch the werewolf transform, or the vampire bite the virgin, or Dr. Frankenstein experiment in the laboratory, or Dr. Jekyll meet Mr. Hyde, and we will probably continue this interest until we resolve whatever it is in these myths that is unresolved within

(continued on inside back cover)

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! GOT A COLLECTORS' ITEM FOR YOU FIBOS! GOT A REAL GREAT CHILLER-DILLER! GIVE THE MAN YOUR GRIMY LITTLE DIME IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY, AND COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! THIS IS THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY WITH ANOTHER OF MY TALES OF HORROR! SO SIT DOWN ON THE TANBARK FLOOR, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURLING YARN I CALL...

**LOWER
BERTH!**

LONG BEFORE THE ADVENT OF RADIO, MOVIES, TELEVISION AND COMIC BOOKS, THE ONLY ENTERTAINMENT FOLKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ENJOYED WERE THE TRAVELLING CARNIVALS, WHICH SET UP THEIR GAILY COLORED TENTS ON VACANT TRACTS OF LAND AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF THEIR TOWNS! ABOUT 80 YEARS AGO, ONE OF THESE CARNIVALS CAME TO A SMALL TOWN IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS...

RIGHT THIS WAY, FOLKS!
SEE THE **SIDE-SHOW!** SEE
THE **GREATEST COLLECTION
OF ODDITIES EVER TO BE
ASSEMBLED UNDER ONE
TENT!** RIGHT THIS WAY,
FOLKS!



THE SIDE SHOW OF THIS PARTICULAR CARNIVAL WAS OWNED BY A MAN NAMED ERNEST FEELEY! PATIENTLY, OVER THE YEARS, HE HAD ASSEMBLED A FABULOUS COLLECTION OF ODDITIES AND FREAKS! HE HAD THE USUAL ATTRACTIONS...

SEE **FANNY, THE FAT LADY**, FOLKS! FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS OF FEMALE PULCHRI-TUDE! SEE **HADNAR, THE SWORD-SWALLOWER...** **SKULL-FACE, THE LIVING SKELETON...** **FEGO, THE FIRE-EATER...**



BUT ERNEST FEELEY HAD ONE ATTRACTION... A **HEAD-LINE** ATTRACTION... THAT NEVER FAILED TO DRAW THE CROWDS... TO SEPARATE THE CURIOUS FROM THEIR QUARTERS...

AND **LAST BUT NOT LEAST**, FOLKS... THE **STAR ATTRACTION** OF FEELEY'S SIDE-SHOW... THE MOST UNUSUAL ODDITY EVER TO BE PUT ON DISPLAY ANYWHERE... ANYTIME! **INSIDE**... IN ITS ORIGINAL **SARGOPHAGUS**... IS **MYRNA, THE ONLY FEMALE EGYPTIAN MUMMY IN EXISTENCE!** TWENTY-FIVE CENTS, FOLKS! RIGHT THIS WAY.



MYRNA, THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY, WAS OWNED BY **ZACHARY GLING**, A RETIRED ARCHAEOLOGIST! ERNEST FEELEY PAID ZACHARY GLING A VERY LARGE SALARY FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF EXHIBITING MYRNA...

... AND NOW, FOLKS... IF YOU WILL STEP THIS WAY... **DOCTOR GLING**, WHO FOUND **MYRNA THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY**, WILL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT HER AND SHOW HER TO YOU...



FIVE TIMES A DAY, ZACHARY GLING WOULD NARRATE HOW HE DISCOVERED MYRNA, AND THEN SHOW HER TO THE GAFING CUSTOMERS! HE'D EVEN UNDO PART OF HER WRAPPINGS...

MYRNA, THE ONLY FEMALE EGYPTIAN MUMMY IN AMERICA WAS FOUND IN THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS BY MY EXPEDITION! HER TOMB WAS DEEP IN THE CLIFFS THAT TOWER OVER THE NILE RIVER...



ON THE TOMB WALLS, WE FOUND THE INSCRIPTIONS DESCRIBING HER INCARCERATION! IT SEEMS THAT MYRNA, OR **MYRANAH**, AS THE EGYPTIANS CALLED HER, WAS A LADY-IN-WAITING TO THE PHAROAH'S WIFE...

BRING ME MY PERFUME, MYRANAH!



MYRANAH WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL, AND SOON CAUGHT THE PHAROAH'S FANCY! BUT LOYAL MYRANAH, FAITHFUL TO HER MISTRESS, REPELLED THE PHAROAH'S ADVANCES...

DO NOT STRUGGLE, MY PET! I AM YOUR KING! YOU MUST DO AS I WISH!



NO! NO! I WILL NOT! NEVER! NEVER!

THE PHAROAH, IN ANGER, ORDERED THAT SHE BE BURIED ALIVE AS PUNISHMENT! MYRANAH WAS FORCIBLY WRAPPED IN THE CEREMONIAL BURIAL WRINDINGS...

SHE FIGHTS LIKE A CAT, SIRE!



SHE WILL FIGHT NO MORE! HURRY!

EEEMMMPH!

AND SO, FOR FOUR THOUSAND YEARS, THIS POOR GIRL LAY IN HER TOMB UNTIL I UNCOVERED HER! AND NOW I GIVE YOU...

MYRNA!

GASP! CHOKE!

THE MUMMIFIED BODY OF THE UNFORTUNATE SERVANT GIRL STOOD IN ITS SARCOPHAGUS, ITS ARMS FOLDED ACROSS ITS CHEST! THE CARNIVAL CUSTOMERS NEVER FAILED TO GASP AND SCREAM WHENEVER DOCTOR CLING WOULD UNCOVER IT

AND NOW...I WILL REMOVE SOME OF THE WRAPPINGS!

IF THE SIGHT OF THE MUMMY WAS REVOLTING, HER UNWRAPPED FACE WAS EVEN MORE SO! THE WRINKLED DRIED FLESH CLUNG TO HER SKULL LIKE WET TISSUE PAPER! HER EYES HAD RECEDED DEEP INTO THEIR SOCKETS! LIPS WERE DRAWN TIGHTLY BACK IN A LEERING GRIN! SOME CRIED OUT...SOME TURNED AWAY...

GOOD LORD!

BUT THERE WERE ALWAYS MORE THE NEXT NIGHT! MORE OF THE CURIOUS! WORD TRAVELED FAST IN SMALL TOWNS! THEY FLOCKED TO SEE MYRNA... SHE WELL EARNED HER KEEP! ERNEST FEELEY PAID ZACHARY CLING HIS SALARY HAPPILY! AND THEN, WHEN THE CARNIVAL HIT THAT SMALL OZARK TOWN...

YOU MR. FEELEY? MY NAME'S JEB SICKLES! I UNNERSTAN' YOU OWN THIS HERE SIDE-SHOW, MR. FEELEY! I THINK WEDBE YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN WHAT I GOT!

WHAT'S THAT, MR. SICKLES?

I'M THE DOG 'ROUND THESE PARTS, MR. FEELEY! AINT GOT NO LICENCE OR NUTHIN', BUT FOLKS LIKE WHAT I DO FOR 'EM SO THEY COME T'ME! 'BOUT TWO YEARS AGO, THIS HERE CRONE COME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS! I'D NEVER LAID EYES ON 'ER B'FORE! SHE BEGGED ME T'COME BACK WITH HER...

LOOK, MR SICKLES! I'M A BUSY MAN! GET TO THE POINT! WHAT IS IT YOU'VE GOT THAT I'D BE INTERESTED IN?

I'LL GET TO IT, MR. FEELEY! TAKE IT EASY! ANYWAY, THIS OLD CRONE BEGGED ME SO BAD I WENT! SHE TOL' ME HER SON WAS SICK... TERRIBLE SICK! SHE SAID HE WAS A-DYIN'! SHE TOOK ME UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO THIS HERE CAVE! I NEARLY THROW'D UP AT WHAT I SAW!

WHAT WAS IT, MR. SICKLES?



'IT WAR HER SON, MR. FEELEY!
HER SON HAD TWO HEADS! IT WAS
HORRIBLE...

CHOKO!

KIN YUH...
KIN YUH DO
ANYTHING
FOR ENOUGH?

'HE WAS TOO FAR GONE FOR ME
T'SAVE! HE DIED 'BOUT AN HOUR
AFTER WE GOT T' THE CAVE...

I'M SORRY, MAAM!
I DONE ALL I
COULD! ENOCH
IS DEAD!

TAKE 'IM
AWAY! TAKE
'IM... SOB...
OUT OF MY
SIGHT!

HE MUSTA BEEN TWENNY-
TWO, MR. FEELEY! I TOOK
HIS BODY BACK DOWN
THE MOUNTAIN AND PUT
IT IN A MOONSHINE
STILL! I DIDN'T
WAN 'NOBODY T'
SEE IT!

AND YOU
STILL
HAVE IT...
THE TWO-
HEADED
BODY?

IT'S BEEN IN THE STILL
FOR TWO YEARS, MR.
FEELEY! THE MOONSHINE
SEEMS T'HAVE PRESERVED
IT! YOU!

TAKE ME TO IT!
QUICKLY!

MR. FEELEY AND THE QUACK DOCTOR PUSHED THEIR
WAY THROUGH THE CROWD OBLING AT MYRNA, THE
MUMMY! OUTSIDE THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS, A HORSE AND
WAGON WAITED! THEY DROVE TO A HIDDEN STILL...

THAR SHE
IS, MR.
FEELEY!

G'MON!

THE LIGHT FROM THE LANTERN CAST AN ORANGE GLOW
INTO THE HUGE WOODEN STILL-VAT! BELOW THE SUR-
FACE OF THE MOONSHINE, THE PULPY WHITE FACES
OF THE TWO-HEADED CORPSE STARED UP AT ERNEST
FEELEY...

THAT'S HIM...

GULP!

ERNEST TURNED TO JED SICKLES... HIS EYES WIDE... HIS
FACE FLUSHED...

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN
MY SHOW, JED? DO WHAT OLD
DOG CLING DOES! EXHIBIT
THIS HERE ENOCH! TELL HOW
YOU GOT HIM! I'LL PAY YOU
A GOOD SALARY!

JOIN UP WITH
YOU FELLERS,
EH? WEL, I
DUNNO! I... I
GUESS I'D
LIKE THAT!

SO, JEB SICKLES TOOK HIS TWO-HEADED PRESERVED BODY OUT OF THE STILL AND JOINED ERNEST FEELEY'S SIDE-SHOW! ENOCH WAS PLACED IN A SPECIALLY MADE GLASS TANK FILLED WITH FORMAL-DEHYDE, AND PUT ON EXHIBIT...

AND NOW FOLKS, I GIVE YOU DOCTOR JEBSON SICKLES... AND ENOCH!

FOLKS! I DISCOVERED ENOCH IN THE CAVE OF AN OLD MOUNTAIN CRONEBACK IN THE OZARKS! HE DIED IN MY ARMS...



WHEN JEB DREW BACK THE CURTAIN REVEALING THE PASTY-SKINNED BLOATED TWO-HEADED CORPSE OF ENOCH, THE SIDE-SHOW CUSTOMERS WOULD GRINCE AND SHUDDER IN REVULSION...

AND NOW, I GIVE YOU... ENOCH! THE TWO-HEADED MAN!

GHOKE! GULP!

COUGH



IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR ERNEST FEELEY TO REALIZE THAT THE THING IN THE HUGE GLASS TANK WAS A REALLY VALUABLE EXHIBIT AND DESERVED STAR BILLING, LIKE MYRNA...

THAT'S RIGHT, JEB! I'M MOVIN' YOU UP TO STAR ATTRACTION! YOU'LL SHARE IT WITH DOG CLING, HERE!

THANKS, HMMPH MR. FEELEY!



SO ENOCH WAS PLACED OPPOSITE MYRNA... AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, JEB SICKLES AND ZACH CLING EXHIBITED THEIR ODDITIES TO THE CURIOUS WHO'D PAID THEIR QUARTERS TO SEE THEM.

... MYRNA...

... ENOCH...



FIVE TIMES A DAY, MYRNA'S ROTTED BROWN WRAPPINGS WERE REMOVED FROM HER MUMMIFIED FACE...

GASP...

GHOKE...



AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, THE CURTAIN HIDING ENOCH'S TANK WAS WITHDRAWN REVEALING THE TWISTING, TURNING PRESERVED CORPSE...



AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, AS THE CROWD OGLED AND GASPED... PASTY-SKINNED, TWO-HEADED ENOCH, FLOATING IN HIS FORMAL-DEHYDE WORLD, STARED WITH GLAZED EYES AT THE PUTRID, MUMMIFIED, UNWRAPPED FACE OF MYRNA THE MUMMY...



THE CARNIVAL MOVED ON FROM TOWN TO TOWN! THE CROWDS FLOCKED TO SEE ENOCH AND MYRNA! AND JEALOUSY BETWEEN ZACH CLING AND JEB SICKLES FLAMED...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE CUTTING MY SALARY? IF IT WASN'T FOR MYRNA...

ENOCH PULLS 'EM IN TOO, ZACH! I'VE BEEN UNDERPAYING JEB! HE AND YOU GET THE SAME FROM NOW ON! I'M LOWERIN' YOUR PAY, AND RAISIN' HIS!



THE BLOATED BODY WITH THE STARING PAIRS OF EYES SWAYED IN THE FORMALDEHYDE! THE DRIED REMAINS IN THE ROTTED WRAPPINGS STOOD SILENTLY! FIVE TIMES A DAY THEY GAZED UPON EACH OTHER...

... ENOCH ...

... MYRNA ...



THEN ERNEST FEELEY... ALWAYS THE BUSINESS MAN... ANNOUNCED...

I'M MOVIN' YOU AND MYRNA OUT FRONT, CLING! WE NEED A DRAW FOR THE ADMISSIONS! JEB AND ENOCH ARE THE STARS NOW...



AND SO, WHEN THE ROTTED WRAPPINGS WERE REMOVED FROM MYRNA'S SUNKEN, MUMMIFIED EYES, SHE LOOKED OUT ACROSS THE CROWD AND SAW NOTHING...

I GIVE YOU... MYRNA...



AND WHEN THE CURTAIN WAS PULLED BACK UNCOVERING ENOCH'S TANK, HE LOOKED OUT ACROSS THE CROWD AND SAW NOTHING...

I GIVE YOU... ENOCH!



THUS, IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT, WHEN THE CARNIVAL FOLK LAY ASLEEP, A DRIED AND BONEY HAND MOVED SLOWLY... HESITANTLY... PULLING AWAY ITS ROTTED BROWN WRAPPINGS...



... WHILE A BLOATED, PALE HAND SLID UPWARD AND OVER THE TANK-RIM, PULLING ITS CHALKY, PULPY BODY AFTER IT...



THE MORNING HEARD THE SIDE-SHOW TENT ECHO WITH ANGRY VOICES...

HE STOLE ENOUGH!
HE STOLE MYRNA!
CALM DOWN, YOU TWO!



ERNEST QUIETED THE RAGING ODDITY OWNERS...

USE YOUR HEADS, YOU FOOLS! IF BOTH ARE MISSING, NEITHER OF YOU COULD HAVE DONE IT!



OLD DOC CLING KNELT TO THE TAM-BARK AND PICKED UP A MUSTY-SMELLING FRAGMENT...

A PIECE OF MYRNA'S WRAPPINGS!
DROPS OF FORMALDEHYDE! THEY GO THAT WAY!



THE THREE MEN FOLLOWED THE FRAGMENTS OF MUMMY WRAPPINGS AND THE DROPLETS OF FORMALDEHYDE OUT OF THE SIDE-SHOW TENT AND INTO THE MORNING SUNLIGHT! THE TRAIL WAS CLEAR... VERY CLEAR...

IT LEADS TO THAT HOUSE!
LOOK AT THE SIGN!
GASP! JUSTICE OF THE... GOOD LORD!



THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE WAS VERY FRIENDLY! HE TOLD THE SIDE-SHOW MEN ALL HE KNEW...

COUPLE CAME LAST NIGHT! YEP! WANTED TO GET MARRIED! I DID IT! I PERFORMED THE CEREMONY!
WASN'T THERE ANYTHING... ER STRANGE ABOUT THEM?



SHUCKS! ALL I CAN SAY IS THEY MUST'VE BEEN DRINKING! SMELLED MIGHTY BAD... LIKE AS IF THEY'D BEEN! BUT FIVE BUCKS IS FIVE BUCKS!



DIDN'T SEE NUTHIN'! CAN'T SEE! I'M BLIND, Y'KNOW!
BLIND!
GOOD LORD!



HEH, HEH! CAREFUL NOW! DON'T PEEK! HERE COMES THE FINISH! BRACE YOURSELVES! FIRST, LET ME SAY THAT MR. FEELEY, JED, AND ZACH LOST MYRNA AND ENOCH'S TRAIL AFTER THEY LEFT THE J. P. F. JUST COULDN'T FIND 'EM! IN FACT, IT WASN'T TILL A YEAR LATER, WHEN THE CARNIVAL RETURNED TO THE VERY OZARK TOWN WHERE ENOCH HAD FIRST JOINED THE SIDE-SHOW...



... THAT MR. FEELEY HEARD ABOUT THE STRANGE DOIN'S UP IN THE MOUNTAINS...

SOMEBODY SAID THEY SEEN 'EM, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE 'EM! WHO EVER HEARD OF A LIVIN' MUMMY AND A TWO-HEADED CORPSE...

WHERE? WHERE? DID THEY SEE 'EM?



UP IN THE OLD CRONE'S CAVE! SHE'S DEAD NOW! BUT THE FOLKS ROUND HERE ARE MIGHTY SUPERSTITIOUS! IF YOU ASK ME, THEY'RE SEEIN' THINGS! NOW...

JEB'LL TAKE ME THERE! HE KNOWS WHERE IT IS!



THEY WENT! JED AND ZACH... WHO'D STAYED ON WITH THE CARNIVAL AS HANDY MEN... AND MR. FEELEY! THEY WENT UP THE MOUNTAIN TO THE OLD CRONE'S CAVE...



LOOK!

GOOD LORD!

IT'S THEM!

AND THE THREE CARNIVAL MEN DRAGGED THEIR LONG-LOST ODDITIES BACK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN...



MYRNA! MY MYRNA!

ENOCH! MY BOY!

AT LAST! AFTER OVER A YEAR!

BUT THE THREE MEN WERE OUT OF EARSHOT WHEN THE WAIL DRIFTED OUT FROM DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF THE CRONE'S CAVE! THEY NEVER SAW THE INFANT-THING CRAWL OUT INTO THE SUNLIGHT... ITS EYES STREAMING WITH TEARS... CRYING FOR ITS PARENTS...



HEH, HEH! YEP! THAT'S IT, KIDDIES! THAT'S MY STORY! YEP! ENOCH OF THE DOUBLE DOMES WAS MY OLD MAN, AND MYRNA THE MUMMY WAS MY OLD LADY! YOU MIGHT SAY, THE MUMMY WAS MY MOMMY! BY THE WAY! I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE'S A CARNIVAL TODAY... EIGHTY YEARS LATER...

THAT STILL EXHIBITS A MUMMY AND A TWO-HEADED PRESERVED CORPSE! IF ANY OF YOU SEE THEM... WRITE ME! I WANT TO SEND A CARD! IT'S THEIR ANNIVERSARY NEXT MONTH!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! NOW IT'S TIME FOR A JAUNT INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, GREEPS! THIS IS YOUR VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO RELATE THIS BLOOD-CURLING TALE FROM MY COLLECTION! SO COME IN, SIT DOWN ON THAT BLOOD-STAINED HOTEL ROOM RUG, AND I'LL TELL YOU HOW IT GOT THAT WAY! I CALL THIS SICKENING SOJOURN INTO THE SCREAMING SEMI-DARKNESS OF SORCIONESS...

THIS TRICK'LL KILL YOU!



HERBERT MARKINI MOVED THROUGH THE MILLING CALCUTTA CROWDS, MOPPING HIS PERSPIRATION-BATHED FACE! THE BLAZING INDIAN SUN WAS DIRECTLY OVERHEAD! THE HEAT WAS UNBEARABLE! HERBERT CURSED...

WHY I EVER CAME TO THIS DISEASE-IMPESTED HELL-HOLE, I'LL NEVER KNOW! I HAVEN'T FOUND ONE NEW ILLUSION SINCE I'VE BEEN HERE! INDIAN FAKIRS! BAN! LUCKY THING I LEFT INEZ AT THE HOTEL! SHE'D PASS OUT IN THIS HEAT!



THE GREAT MARKINI, FAMOUS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR HIS ASTOUNDING FEATS OF MAGIC, PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE DARK-SKINNED THROG... STOPPING FOR A FEW MINUTES TO WATCH AS EACH SQUATTING INDIAN FAKIR WOULD PERFORM HIS TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS...



MMMPH! THE OLD CABBAGE-
IN-THE-GROUND-ILLUSION!
OLD AS THE HILLS!

HERBERT MOVED DOWN THE LITTER-FILLED ALLEY TO WHERE THE INDIAN GIRL SQUATTED BEFORE HER ODDLY-SHAPED BASKET! THE CROWD BEHIND, OUT IN THE MARKET-PLACE, SEEMED TO FADE FROM EARSHOT! THE GIRL LOOKED UP AT MARKINI AND SMILED...



YOU... WANT... TRICK?
I DO... FOR RUPEE!

SATISFIED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING NEW TO SEE, NOTHING HE COULD ADD TO HIS FABULOUS MAGIC ACT, HERBERT WOULD MOVE ON FROM ONE FAKIR TO THE NEXT! THEN, IN A DARK ALLEY OFF THE TEAMING MARKET PLACE, HE SAW HER! THE DARK-HAIRED, FLASHING-EYED INDIAN GIRL...



HELLO! WHAT'S THAT? SHE WEARS
A FAKIR'S SHAWL! I WONDER WHAT
SHE HAS IN THE BASKET!

THE COIN TINKLED TO THE CORNLE-STONES AT THE GIRL'S BARE FEET! SHE PICKED IT UP, EXAMINED IT, AND... LIFTING THE LID OFF THE BASKET... TOSSED THE COIN IN! HERBERT PEERED DOWN! INSIDE THE BASKET LAY A COIL OF HEAVY ROPE, OLD AND FRAYED...



YOU HEAR TELL OF
INDIAN ROPE TRICK?

SURE! I'VE HEARD TELL
OF IT! BUT THAT'S ALL! JUST
TALK! I DON'T BELIEVE
THAT THERE IS SUCH A
THING!

THE GIRL PULLED A SMALL REED INSTRUMENT FROM THE FOLDS IN HER GOWN AND PUT IT TO HER LIPS! SHE TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND BEGAN TO BLOW SOFTLY! THE WEIRD NOTE TREMBLED! THE COIL OF ROPE IN THE BASKET STIRRED...



WHAT THE...?

THE SINGLE NOTE CONTINUED! ONE END OF THE COIL OF ROPE STOOD UP... SWAYING LIKE AN ENTRANCED COBRA...



GOOD LORD!

AND AS THE GIRL'S BREATH RAN OUT AND THE NOTE BEGAN TO FADE... THE END OF THE ROPE BEGAN TO RISE HIGHER AND HIGHER INTO THE AIR...



I DON'T BELIEVE
IT!

WHEN THE LAST VIBRATION ENDED THE ROPE STOOD UPRIGHT AT ITS FULL UNCOILED LENGTH... FIFTEEN... MAYBE TWENTY FEET INTO THE AIR...



ASTOUNDING!

THE GIRL GOT TO HER FEET AND MOVED TO THE ROPE! AS HERBERT WATCHED, HORRIFIED, SHE BEGAN TO CLIMB IT...



GODD LORD!

SHE PULLED HERSELF EASILY, HAND OVER HAND, TILL SHE REACHED THE TOP.



I'LL BUY IT! I'LL PAY YOU ANYTHING... ANYTHING!

THE DARK-HAIRED, FLASHING-EYED NATIVE GIRL SLID TO THE GROUND ONCE AGAIN AND THE ROPE COLLAPSED INTO THE BASKET...



HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT FOR THE TRICK? NAME YOUR PRICE, GIRL?

I CANNOT SELL THE ROPE! IT WAS MY MOTHER'S AND HER MOTHER'S AND...

BAN! KEEP YOUR ROPE! TELL ME HOW IT IS DONE! TELL ME THE SECRET! I'LL MAKE MY OWN...



THERE IS NO SECRET, SAHIB! IT IS THE ROPE! YOU CANNOT MAKE ONE! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

THE ROPE?! WHAT KIND OF NONSENSE IS THAT? IT'S AN ORDINARY ROPE! WHAT'S INSIDE? A WIRE? WHAT'S UNDER THE BASKET? A TRAP-ODOR? C'MON! I'LL PAY YOU FIVE HUNDRED RUPEES!



IT IS THE ROPE ITSELF. SAHIB! SEE?

THE GIRL LIFTED THE BASKET! THERE WAS NO TRAP DOOR BELOW... NO HOLE OUT OF WHICH A POLE COULD BE EXTENDED... NOTHING...



YOU SEE, SAHIB? IT IS THE ROPE! AND THE ROPE IS NOT FOR SALE!

IMPOSSIBLE! THERE MUST BE A TRICK TO IT! THERE MUST!

THAT NIGHT, THE GREAT MARKINI PACED HIS HOTEL ROOM NERVOUSLY! FINALLY THE DOOR OPENED AND A WOMAN ENTERED...



HERE WAS A TIMID KNOCK ON THE HOTEL ROOM DOOR! HERBERT SWUNG IT OPEN...

COME IN!
COME IN! AH!
I SEE YOU HAVE THE BASKET!

YOU! YOU ARE THE MAN I PERFORMED FOR THIS AFTERNOON!



YES! MY NAME IS MARKINI! IN THE UNITED STATES, I AM A FAMOUS MAGICIAN! THIS IS MY WIFE, INEZ!

AH! THE LADY THAT INVITED ME HERE! SHE SAID I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE THE ROPE RISE HERE!



THAT'S RIGHT, HONEY! I THINK YOU'VE GOT SOME WIRE ARRANGEMENT IN THAT ALLEY BACK THERE!

I TOLD YOU BOTH! IT IS THE ROPE... NOTHING MORE! WATCH...



THE GIRL PLACED THE BASKET ON THE FLOOR OF THE ROOM! THEN SHE TOOK OUT THE CURIOUS REED INSTRUMENT AND BEGAN TO BLOW! THE WEIRD NOTE FILLED THE ROOM! THE ROPE BEGAN TO RISE...



IT'S IN THE BASKET, HERB! THE GIMMICK MUST BE IN THERE...OR IN THE ROPE...

I'LL GET 'ER... 'ER...

SUDDENLY...THE WEIRD-SOUNDING, TREMBLING NOTE WAS CUT SHORT! THE ROPE COLLAPSED! HERBERT'S POWERFUL FINGERS HELD THE INDIAN GIRL'S NECK IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP...



DON'T LET HER SCREAM, HERB!

I... GASP... WON'T...

SOON, THE THROTTLED NATIVE GIRL'S BODY WENT LIMP AND SHE SLID TO THE FLOOR...



SHE... SHE'S DEAD!

G'NOW! LET'S LOOK AT THAT ROPE!

THE MURDERERS RUSHED TO THE COLLAPSED ROPE LYING ON THE HOTEL ROOM FLOOR! HERB SEARCHED THE AND EXAMINED IT CLOSELY! INEZ PICKED IT UP BASKET...



THE ROPE...IT'S NOT HOLLOW! THERE'S NO WIRE! IT'S...IT...

THERE'S NOTHING IN THE BASKET! NOTHING!

INEZ AND HERBERT STARED AT EACH OTHER...

NO GIMMICK!
NO PROP!
BUT...BUT...

WE SAW IT START
RISING! IT
WAS WORKING!



SUDDENLY INEZ'S GLANCE FELL! THE STRANGE-LOOKING REED INSTRUMENT WAS STILL GLUTCHED IN THE DEAD NATIVE GIRL'S HAND.

THE PIPE, HERB!
TRY THE PIPE!

BUT...BUT
WHAT GOOD
WILL THAT
DO?



HERB WRENCHED THE FLUTE-LIKE INSTRUMENT FROM THE CORPSE AND PUT IT TO HIS LIPS! THE WEIRD NOTE ECHOED THROUGH THE ROOM...

LOOK, HERB!
LOOK!



THE PRAYED END OF THE ROPE BEGAN TO RISE...

KEEP BLOWING, HERB!
KEEP BLOWING!



HIGHER AND HIGHER THE ROPE ROSE UNTIL IT TOUCHED THE CEILING OF THE ROOM! HERB'S BREATH RAN OUT AND THE NOTE FADED! THE ROPE STOOD STIFFLY...

SHE...GASP... SHE WASN'T
LYING! IT IS THE ROPE
THERE'S SOMETHING
ABOUT IT...

WE'VE GOT A
GOLD MINE, HERB!
A GOLD MINE!



INEZ MOVED TO THE ROPE! SHE CLOSED HER HANDS AROUND IT AND BEGAN TO PULL HERSELF UP...

IT HOLDS ME, HERB!
I CAN CLIMB IT!

WE'LL KNOCK THEM DEAD!
INEZ! JUST WAIT TILL
WE GET BACK TO THE
STATES! WE'LL...



INEZ HAD REACHED THE TOP OF THE ROPE! SUDDENLY... HER FACE WAS CONTORTED IN PAIN! HER EYES BULGED IN HORROR...

HERB! I... EEEEEEEEEEE!



HERBERT MARKINI STARED AT THE SPOT NEAR THE CEILING WHERE INEZ HAD BEEN! SHE'D SIMPLY VANISHED! HER HYSTERICAL SHRIEK CAME FROM VERY FAR AWAY...



THE ROPE CURLED UPWARD... THE PRAYED END STILL IN THE BASKET WHIPPED OUTWARD... WRAPPING AROUND HERBERT'S NECK...



THE COMPLAINTS OF NEIGHBORS BROUGHT THE MANAGER OF THE CALCUTTA HOTEL TO HERBERT AND INEZ MARKINI'S ROOM! HE FOUND THE MASTER MAGICIAN HANGING FROM A ROPE... SWAYING CRAZILY! THE ROPE ENDED AT THE CEILING... APPARENTLY UNATTACHED...



SUDDENLY A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPED OVER THE GREAT MARKINI! OBJECTS RAINED DOWN FROM NOWHERE ABOUT HIM... FALLING TO THE CALCUTTA HOTEL ROOM FLOOR! HORRIBLE OBJECTS! QUIVERING PIECES OF INEZ'S BODY...



AND SLOWLY... STEADILY... THE ROPE CONTINUED TO RISE... UNTIL...



HEH, HEH! THAT ABOUT WRAPS IT UP, KIDDIES... NEATLY KNOTTED! WHEN THEY TRIED TO CUT POOR HERBIE DOWN, THE ROPE JUST COLLAPSED AND HE FELL TO THE FLOOR AMID INEZ'S DISMEMBERED REMAINS! AS FOR THE INDIAN GIRL... THEY FOUND NO TRACE OF HER! WHAT HAPPENED TO HER BODY? NEXT TIME YOU'RE IN CALCUTTA, LOOK FOR HER IN THAT ALLEYWAY! SHE'LL BE THERE... WITH HER ROPE! JUST BE CAREFUL! DON'T LET HER STRING YOU ALONG!



A RARE E.C. OFFER

Seventeen years ago a small publishing company called **East Coast Comix** reprinted a dozen of the original E.C. in full color as regular 32-page comic books. Without national distribution the market was not able to sustain their continuation. Shortly after they ceased production we bought the remaining small inventory, realizing they would become **real collector's items** someday. With the return of E.C. through Gladstone, that day has come! None of these 1973 and '74 reprints is scheduled to be duplicated by Gladstone before 1992 and some later than that. The **Two Fisted Tales** and **Shock SuspenStories** comics have no place on our schedule at the present time. The following are available individually or as a lot while the very limited supply lasts.



- ❑1. **The Cry of Terror 1**, Feb. 1955 **\$12.00**
Planned to debut as E.C.'s fourth horror title, it instead became the last issue of **Tales From the Crypt**, number 46. It contains a Jack Davis werewolf story and George Evans' famous razor blade sizzler, "Bind Aways." Highly recommended. Very very limited.
- ❑2. **Weird Science 15**, Sept. 1952 **\$8.00**
Incredible issue, with the first E.C. story by Al Williamson, who quickly became a favorite, and "The Marbans," one of Wallace Wood's best. Also, a photo and biography of Joe Orlando, who draws captive earthmen in "Bum Steer."
- ❑3. **Shock SuspenStories 12**, Dec. 1953 **\$6.00**
Drug abuse is dealt with for one of the first times in comics in the powerful Joe Orlando effort, "The Monkey." Reed Crandall's "The Kidnapper" generated mail from many parents. Wally Wood touches on suicide in "The Fall Guy." And a murderous alcoholic is portrayed in "Deadline" by Jack Kamen.
- ❑4. **The Haunt of Fear 12**, Mar., 1952 **\$5.00**
Two rotting corpse stories highlight an issue of great art by "Ghastly" Graham Ingels and Jack Davis. Johnny Craig has a story, biography and a photo. His story of a love triangle involves two shootings and a mysterious tattoo that miraculously implicates the killer.
- ❑5. **Weird Fantasy 13**, May, 1952 **\$5.00**
Special issue with two tales illustrated by Wallace Wood including "Home to Stay," an unforgettable adaptation of two Ray Bradbury short stories. E.C.'s science fiction and horror editor/artist Al Feldstein has a bio with photo.
- ❑6. **Crime SuspenStories 25**, Oct. 1954 **\$5.00**
Jack Kamen's **Mad** deals with multiple murder. Reed Crandall's story involves a knife and some "outting up" during a prison break. Bernie Krigstein's effort chronicles madness and George Evans' yarn weaves brutal fiction of a sadistic police lieutenant.
- ❑7. **The Vault of Horror 26**, Aug. 1952 **\$6.00**
Putrid palpitations of a ghoul and a vampire in love, werewolves, walking corpses and a voodoo curse are all rendered in color by Johnny Craig, Jack Davis, Sid Check and Graham Ingels.
- ❑8. **Shock SuspenStories 6**, Dec. 1952 **\$6.00**
One story each of crime, suspense, sci-fi and horror, plus a biography and photo of fan favorite Wally Wood. Graham Ingels illustrates a rare appearance of the Old Witch outside the horror titles. Wood's "Under Cover" is a shocker dealing with overt prejudice that was largely ignored by society in the 1950s. Great issue!
- ❑9. **Two Fisted Tales 34**, July, 1953 **\$5.00**
Jack Davis writes and draws the lead western. Betsy and Wally Wood conceive "Trial by Arms," a medieval story of treachery and murder. John Sevens inks a desert epic and George Evans illustrates his specialty—a finale about World War I flying acts.
- ❑10. **The Haunt of Fear 23**, Jan. 1954 **\$5.00**
Jack Kamen does one of his famous "Grim" Fairy Tales, this time a horrific version of Hansel and Gretel. A dark, brooding, beautifully drawn Jack Davis swamp tale and a werewolf story are also featured.

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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!



HEH, HEH! WHY NOT TELL A GRIM FAIRY TALE?... I'M PRETTY GRIM! SO HERE GOES WITH THE JARRING JUVENILE JABBERWOCKEY I CALL...

THE FUNERAL

ONCE UPON A TIME, LONG, LONG AGO, IN A KINGDOM FAR, FAR AWAY, THERE WAS A CASTLE! AND IN THIS CASTLE DWELT A KING... A QUEEN... AND A YOUNG DASHING PRINCE...

PRINCE JUNIOR! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO DASH THROUGH THE HALLS LIKE THAT!

SOB... I FELL ON MY ROYAL... SOB...



NOW THE KING AND QUEEN OF THIS FAR, FAR AWAY KINGDOM WERE VERY BUSY... KINGING AND QUEENING! THEY'D HAD NO TIME TO TAKE CARE OF YOUNG PRINCE JUNIOR! SO... THEY'D HIRED A NURSE WHEN JUNIOR WAS JUST A BABE...

HOW IS PRINCE JUNIOR TODAY, NURSE?

MAY WE SEE HIM?

HUSH! HE'S SLEEPING! YOU CAN HAVE JUST ONE PEEK... THAT'S ALL!



NATURALLY AS PRINCE JUNIOR GREW, HE BECAME MORE AND MORE ATTACHED TO HIS OLD NURSE...

PRINCE JUNIOR! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? OH, DEAR...

GIGGLE... GIGGLE... I TIED YOU A PIN SWINGS TO ME BEWLT! WE IS ATTACHED!



EVERY DAY, NURSE FANNY (FOR THAT WAS HER NAME!) WOULD DRESS PRINCE JUNIOR...

THERE! YOU LOOK VERY NICE! NOW DON'T GET DIRTY! YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER ARE COMING TO SEE YOU SOON!

YETN, NURTN FANNY!



... WOULD SCOLD HIM WHEN HE WAS NAUGHTY...

I TOLD YOU NOT TO GET DIRTY... YOU BAD, BAD BOY!

AND, HOW DID I KNOW THEY PUNLED UP THE DRAW-BWIDGE?



... WOULD READ TO HIM WHEN HE WAS GOOD...

WEAD TO ME ABOUT THE WICKED WITCH WHAT COOKS THE BAD WITTLE PEASANT CHILDWEN IN HER OVEN, NURTN, FANNY!

ALL RIGHT, PRINCE JUNIOR! LET'S SEE! AN! HERE! 'ONCE UPON A TIME...



... WOULD TUCK HIM IN AT NIGHT!

GOOD NIGHT, PRINCE JUNIOR!

JUST ONE MORE STONY, NURTN FANNY! THE ONE ABOUT THE WICKED WITCH WHAT COOKS THE BAD WITTLE PEASANT CHILDWEN!



NURSE FANNY WAS MORE OF A MOTHER TO PRINCE JUNIOR THAN THE QUEEN...

I WOY YOU, NURTH FANNY!

AND I LOVE YOU, LITTLE PRINCE!



AND SO, WHEN PRINCE JUNIOR WOKE UP ONE MORNING AND FOUND NURSE FANNY LYING VERY STILL...

NURTH FANNY! NURTH FANNY! THEPEAK TO ME!





BUT NURSE FANNY DID NOT SPEAK! NURSE FANNY WAS VERY COLD AND VERY WHITE...

SHE IS DEAD, MY SON!

THOB... NURTH FANNY! THOB... THOB... THOB...

DO NOT CRY, MY CHILD!



BUT THE QUEEN'S PLEADING COULD NOT MAKE HER LITTLE BOY STOP CRYING...

THOB... I WANT NURTH FANNY! THOB... THOB... I WANT... THOB... MY NURTH...

DO SOMETHING, SO HENRICH! HIS LITTLE HEART IS BREAKING! SO WHAT CAN I DO?



MAKE SOMETHING UP! PROMISE HIM SOMETHING! ANYTHING!

PRINCE JUNIOR! YOU SHOULDN'T CRY! THINK OF ALL THE CANDY!

THOB... I WANT THOB... THOB...

GANDY?? WHAT GANDY??



AT THE FUNERAL?



FUNERAL? WHAT... THOB... IS THAT?

WHEN SOMEONE DIES, MY SON, THEY MAKE A FUNERAL! WE'LL HAVE A FUNERAL FOR FANNY! WE'LL INVITE ALL YOUR COUSINS.



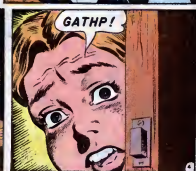
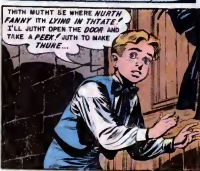
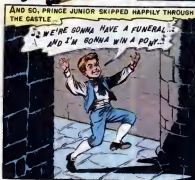
WHAT ABOUT THE CANDY?

AND WE'LL SERVE CANDY... AND CAKE...



WIF WHIPPED CREAM?

WITH WHIPPED CREAM! AND WE'LL PLAY GAMES AND GIVE PRIZES...



NURSE FANNY WAS STRETCHED OUT ON A VELVET-DRAPED BIER! AT HER HEAD, TWO CANDLES BURNED! THE ROOM WAS DARK, SAVE FOR THE GLOW FROM THE TWO FLICKERING FLAMES! BUT THERE WAS ENOUGH LIGHT FOR PRINCE JUNIOR TO SEE...

SUDDENLY, THE ROOM WAS FILLED WITH AN EERIE MOAN.



NURSE FANNY SAT UP, SHAKING HER HEAD...

OH, DEAR! I MUST HAVE HAD AN ATTACK! I HAVEN'T HAD ONE OF THOSE IN YEARS!

NURTH FANNY! NURTH FANNY! YOU'RE NOT DEAD!

PRINCE JUNIOR RAN INTO NURSE FANNY'S OUT-STRETCHED ARMS AND SHE HUGGED HIM TENDERLY...

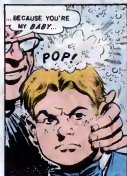
NO, MY DEAR! I'M NOT DEAD! YOU KNOW I WOULDN'T LEAVE YOU!

OH, NURTH FANNY! I... I...



SUDDENLY PRINCE CHARMING THOUGHT ABOUT ALL HIS COUSINS

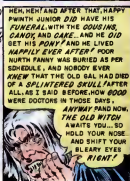
...NOT IN A MILLION YEARS...



AND THEN HE THOUGHT ABOUT ALL THE CANDY...

... AND I'D NEVER LEAVE MY BABY...

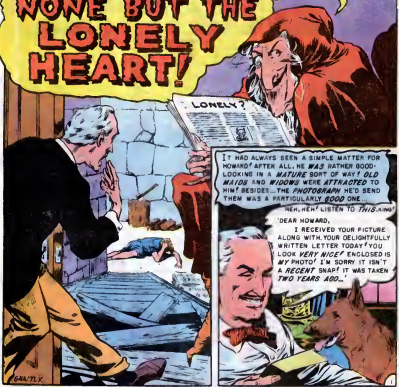




THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

WELL...HEE,HEE...IT'S ME...YOUR HOSTESS IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO RUSTLE UP ANOTHER REVOLTING RECIPE IN MY CRUDDY CAULDRON! SO, CRAWL IN, CREEPS! KNOT YOUR DRIBBLE NAPKINS AROUND YOUR SCRAWNY NECKS...FASTEN YOUR DROOL CUPS... AND I'LL DISH OUT THE TALE OF TERROR I CALL...

NONE BUT THE LONELY HEART!



IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN A SIMPLE MATTER FOR HOWARD! AFTER ALL, HE WAS RATHER GOOD-LOOKING IN A MATURE SORT OF WAY! OLD MAIDS AND WIDOWS WERE ATTRACTED TO HIM! BESIDES...THE PHOTOGRAPH HE'D SEND THEM WAS A PARTICULARLY GOOD ONE...

HEH,HEH! LISTEN TO THIS,AIN'T!

'DEAR HOWARD,
I RECEIVED YOUR DELIGHTFULLY WRITTEN LETTER TODAY! YOU LOOK VERY NICE! ENCLOSED IS MY PHOTO! I'M SORRY IT ISN'T A RECENT SNAP! IT WAS TAKEN TWO YEARS AGO...'

HOWARD PATTED HIS DOG'S HEAD AND SMILED...



HE LIFTED THE PICTURE FROM THE ENVELOPE AND GASPED...



INDEED, HOWARD'S LATEST PROPOSED VICTIM WAS BEAUTIFUL! HOWARD STUDIED HER FOR A MOMENT, THOUGHTFULLY...



HOWARD SAT BACK, THE PICTURE IN HIS LAP, AND LIT HIS PIPE. THE SMOKE CURLED UP LAZILY, THINKING AS IT DRIFTED TOWARD THE CEILING...



'WE GOT HER NAME FROM A LONELY-HEARTS CLUB LIST! REMEMBER? THAT WAS BACK WHEN I FIRST DECIDED TO START THIS LITTLE 'LOVE-FOR-MONEY' GAME! AFTER A COUPLE OF WARM LETTERS CROSSED, IT CAME...'



'SO WE TOOK THE PLUNGE, EH, BOY? WE WROTE PASSIONATE TOMES OF LOVE, AND FINALLY PROPOSED! AND SHE ACCEPTED! SO WE PAWNY MY WATCH, BOUGHT A NEW SUIT OF CLOTHES... AND A TICKET... AND WENT...'



'HOW LONG WAS IT AFTER OUR WEDDING, KING? SIX MONTHS? NOT MUCH MORE! POOR MATILDA! SHE NEVER EVEN KNEW WE'D LOOSENED THE TOP CELLAR STAIR...

EEEEEAHHH!

MATILDA! WHAT IS IT?

'THE FALL DIDN'T KILL HER, DID IT? WE HAD TO GO DOWN AND FINISH THE JOB! MESSY BUSINESS!'

HOWARD...GASP...I'M HURT...
GASP...I...I...

HOWARD!

'HOW MUCH DID WE MAKE ON THAT DEAL, KING? LET'S SEE! WE SOLD THE HOUSE FOR TEN THOUSAND... AND...OH, YES! ALL TOLD, ABOUT SIXTY GRAND!'

'HEH, HEH! SO WE MOVED ON, EH, KING? AND ABOUT THREE MONTHS LATER, WE CONTACTED OUR SECOND VICTIM! SHE'D ADVERTIZED IN A PERSONAL COLUMN, HAIN'T SHE? YET...IT BEGAN AGAIN!'

'TOOK US SIX MONTHS OF ARDENT LOVE-MAKING VIA THE U.S. MAIL TO CONVINCE THAT ONE, HUH, KING? WHAT WAS HER NAME? OH, YES...'

YOU'RE... LEAVING US, MR. CROWN?

WHY...YES, MRS. SENTINE! I...I JUST CAN'T STAY HERE...WITH ALL THESE MEMORIES...

WELL, AT LEAST SHE'S BETTER THAN THE LAST ONE, EH, KING? LORD, AREN'T THERE ANY PRETTY RICH WIDOWS?

HOWARD? SWEET...

EPHIE...MY DEAR...

'WE DIDN'T WASTE MUCH TIME WITH HER, EH, KING? SHE WASN'T AS WEALTHY AS WE THOUGHT! SOME-TIMES IT'S HARD TO TELL, ISN'T IT? AND YOU CAN'T VERY WELL ASK! HOW LONG DID EPHIE LAST BEFORE SHE FELL FROM HER APARTMENT WINDOW?..'

'THE FRESH-AIR-FIEND! HEH, HEH! IT WAS SO EASY TO PUSH HER! SHE HAD JEWELRY, THOUGH! HOW MUCH DID WE GET? FIVE GRAND OR SO, WASN'T IT?'

WE HATE TO SEE YOU GO, MR. PRINCE!

THE APARTMENT...WELL...IT'S SO BIG AND... EMPTY NOW!

YAAA AAAAAHHH!

NUMBER THREE ANSWERED OUR AD, EH, KING? SHE WAS THE WORST OF THE LOT! TWO HUNDRED POUNDS, AT LEAST! BUT SHE HAD THAT REAL ESTATE... OUT IN OKLAHOMA! SO...

THAT JOB WAS THE CLEVEREST, THOUGH, I MUST ADMIT! REMEMBER? I MADE SURE TO LEAVE YOU HOME THAT DAY WE WENT DRIVING...

I LEAPED FROM THE CAR JUST AS IT WENT OVER THE CLIFF! OH, YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE, KING! YOU'D HAVE BEEN PROUD OF ME! AND WHAT A SIGHT! THE CAR GOING OVER AND OVER... DOWN... DOWN...

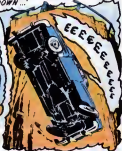


HOWARD! DEAREST!

LUELLA, MY LOVE! CHOKO...

BE CAREFUL, HOWARD! THERE'S A SHARP DROP ON THIS TURN! YOU... YOU... HOWARD! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

GOOD-BYE, LUELLA!



THAT REAL ESTATE BROUGHT US SEVENTY GRAND MUM, KING! YES! BUT THAT WAS A MISTAKE! SELLING IT! LATER, THEY FOUND OIL THERE! OF ALL THE LUCK! OH, WELL! WE MADE UP FOR IT ON NUMBER FOUR! REMEMBER HER?...?

THE FACTORY THAT VERONICA'S FIRST HUSBAND HAD LEFT HER WAS WORTH A SMALL FORTUNE! CHEMICALS! IT SPELLED HER OWN UNDOING, EH, KING? REMEMBER HOW I LEARNED ABOUT THAT NON-TRACEABLE POISON?...!



HOWARD! MY DREAM...

VERONICA! YOU LOOK EVEN LOVELIER THAN YOUR PICTURE GAG...



HOWARD! THAT COFFEE! I... I... GASP...

YES, VERONICA? WHAT ABOUT IT?

POOR VERONICA! THE POISON MADE HER GO INTO SUCH PAINFUL CONVULSIONS BEFORE SHE DIED! BUT A HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS WASN'T HAY, WAS IT, KING?...

HEH, HEH! HOW MANY WERE THERE ALL TOGETHER, KING? SEVEN? YES! SEVEN! WHY... WE COULD HAVE RETIRED EASILY WITH THE FORTUNE WE'D MADE FROM THEM! BUT THEN WE READ THIS ONE'S... JANET'S AD...!



YOU'RE SURE YOU WANT TO SELL, MR. ROYAL? AFTER ALL...

YES, MR. BIBBS! I'D RATHER! - I COULDN'T GO ON WITHOUT... HER!



HMMM! LISTEN TO THIS, KING! 'LONELY WOMAN DESIRES CORRESPONDENCE WITH REFINED GENTLEMAN!'

'WE COULDN'T RESIST, COULD WE, KING? WE HAD TO WRITE! AND THEN HER ANSWER CAME...'



'DEAR MR. THRONE, YOUR LETTER ARRIVED TODAY, AND I READ IT WITH MUCH INTEREST! YOU SOUND VERY CULTURED AND WELL TRAVELED! I WOULD ENJOY CORRESPONDING WITH YOU! JANET LANE'

HOWARD PUT HIS PIPE DOWN AND SMILED 'HE SHUFFLED THROUGH A SHEAF OF PAPERS...



SO WE STARTED WRITING. EH, KING? LET'S SEE! HERE'S HER SECOND LETTER...

'DEAR HOWARD... IF I MAY BE SO SO BOLD, I RESIDE IN A STURDILY BUILT STONE HOUSE. THE PROPERTY IS VERY LARGE... ALMOST TWELVE ACRES... AND VERY WELL KEPT! BUT FOR A WOMAN SUCH AS MYSELF, BEING ALONE AS I AM... WITHOUT ANYONE LIVING FOR MILES AROUND... LIFE CAN BE VERY HARD. YOUR LETTERS ARE A GREAT COMFORT'



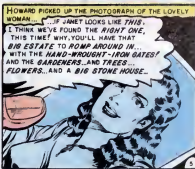
CAN'T YOU SEE HER, KING? THIS RAVISHING WOMAN LIVING ALONE ON THIS PALATIAL ESTATE IN A HUGE FIELDSTONE HOUSE! WHY... IT SOUNDS ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE...



LISTEN TO THIS LETTER! 'MARBLE FLOORS... SAY! 'FURNISHED IN EXQUISITE TASTE'... 'HARD WOODS'... 'BRONZE TRIMS'... 'SATIN DRAPERIES'... 'STAINED GLASS WINDOWS'...



KING, M'BOY! I THINK IT'S TIME THAT YOU AND I WERE SETTLING DOWN! WE'RE NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER, YOU KNOW! AND IF JANET...



HOWARD PICKED UP THE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE LOVELY WOMAN... ...IF JANET LOOKS LIKE THIS, I THINK WE'VE FOUND THE RIGHT ONE, THIS TIME! WHY, YOU'LL HAVE THAT BIG ESTATE TO ROMP AROUND IN... WITH THE HAND-WROUGHT-IRON GATES! AND THE GARDENERS... AND TREES... FLOWERS... AND A BIG STONE HOUSE...

HOWARD PICKED UP A PEN...

I'M GOING TO *PROPOSE* TO HER, KING! SHE SPEAKS OF HOW *LOVELY* SHE IS... AND SHE HAS MY *PICTURE!* MAYBE... *MAYBE* SHE'LL SAY 'YES'!



THREE DAYS LATER, JANET'S ANSWER CAME...

SHE'S ACCEPTED, KING! SHE'LL MARRY ME! OH, I WOULDN'T LET MYSELF *HOPE...* BUT NOW I'M SO HAPPY!



HOWARD PACKED HIS BAGS...

NO MORE *WANDERING AROUND* FOR US, BOY! NO MORE *ALIASES...* NO MORE *FALSE LOVE-MAKING!* WE'RE *SETTLING DOWN...* FOR GOOD...



HOWARD SENT A TELEGRAM ON AHEAD ANNOUNCING HIS EXPECTED ARRIVAL DATE, AND HE AND KING SET OUT BY CAR FOR JANET'S HOME...

ONLY *FIFTY MORE MILES, BOY!* WE'LL BE THERE BEFORE *MIDNIGHT!*



HOWARD CHECKED JANET'S ADDRESS WITH A POLICE-MAN IN THE TOWN...

BAYBERRY ROAD? WHY IT'S STRAIGHT ON SOUTH ABOUT *TWO MILES!* YOU CAN'T MISS IT! WHAT *NUMBER* WAS THAT?

THAT'S ALL RIGHT OFFICER! I'LL FIND IT! *THANKS!*



BAYBERRY ROAD WAS A LONG NARROW TREE-LINED LANE OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY! THERE WERE FEW HOUSES ALONG IT! FINALLY...

THERE'S THE *WROUGHT-IRON GATE, KING!* WE'RE HERE!



AS HOWARD'S CAR SWUNG IN AT THE GATE, HIS HEADLIGHTS FELL ACROSS...

WHAT THE..?



THE LETTERS WERE RUSTED AND OLD, BUT VERY CLEAR...

A CEMETERY!



KING BEGAN TO WHINE SOFTLY...

STEADY, BOY! STEADY!
WE MUST HAVE MADE
A MISTAKE...



SUDDENLY, THE CAR DOOR SWUNG OPEN! KING YELPED...

GOOD LORD!
YI-YI-YI-YI!



THE ROTTED, DECAYED THING GRINNED... REACHING OUTWARD! ITS FLESH CRAWLED WITH THE SLIME OF DEATH! ITS VOICE RASPED LIKE A WORN OUT GRAMAPHONE CYLINDER...

HOWARD... DA-A-ARLING!

JANET! GASP!
NO!
NO!



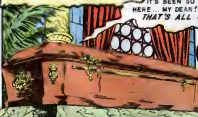
KING LEAPED FROM THE CAR, HOWLING! THE THING CLOSED ITS FLESH-TATTERED BONEY FINGERS AROUND HOWARD'S WRIST IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP AND DRAGGED HIM FROM THE CAR TOWARD THE OPEN MAUSOLEUM...

I'M SORRY I DIDN'T HAVE A MORE RECENT SNAPSHOTS, MY DEAR! AREN'T THE GROUNDS JUST AS I DESCRIBED THEM?

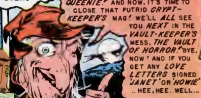


THE FEMALE-THING DRAGGED THE SCREAMING MAN INTO THE SATIN DRAPED MAUSOLEUM WITH THE STAINED GLASS WINDOW... ACROSS THE MARBLE FLOOR AND INTO THE HARD-WOOD, BRONZE-TRIMMED COFFIN! AND ALL THE WHILE, AS IT CLOSED THE LID DOWN, IT KEPT MURMURING... SPEWING ITS FOUL-SMELLING BREATH UPON HIS TERROR-STRICKEN FACE...

IT'S BEEN SO LONELY
HERE... MY DEAR! BUT NOW...
THAT'S ALL OVER!



HEE, HEE! WHAT A LOVE AFFAIR, EH, KIDDIES? 'ALL OVER, NOW' IS RIGHT... FOR HOWIE, THAT IS! OH, BY THE WAY! IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO KING, REST YOUR FIENDISH MINDS! JANET HAD A DOG... NAMED QUEENIE! AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO CLOSE THAT PUTRID CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAG! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT-KEEPER'S NESS, THE VAULT OF HORROR! 'BYE, NOW' AND IF YOU GET ANY LOVE LETTERS SIGNED JANET OR HOWIE... HEE, HEE, WELL...



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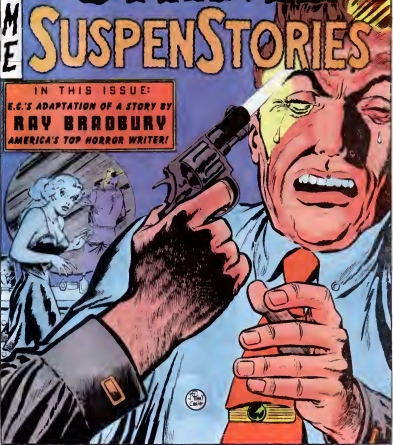
CRIME



CRIME

SUSPENSTORIES

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RAY BRADBURY
AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!



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TOUCH *and* GO!



WILLIAM ACTON ROSE TO HIS FEET. THE CLOCK ON THE MANTEL TICKED MIDNIGHT. HE LOOKED AT HIS FINGERS AND HE LOOKED AT THE LARGE ROOM AROUND HIM AND HE LOOKED AT THE MAN NAMED ARTHUR HUXLEY LYING ON THE FLOOR WHO WAS DEAD AND WOULD SAY NO MORE SAYINGS NOR BRUTALIZE MORE BRUTALITIES. WILLIAM ACTON, WHOSE FINGERS HAD STROKED TYPEWRITER KEYS AND MADE LOVE AND FRIED HAM AND EGGS FOR EARLY BREAKFASTS, HAD NOW ACCOMPLISHED A MURDER WITH THOSE SAME TEN WHORLED FINGERS...



NOW WHAT? HIS EVERY IMPULSE EXPLODED HIM IN A HYSTERIA TOWARD THE DOOR. GET OUT, GET AWAY, RUN, NEVER COME BACK, BOARD A TRAIN, GET A TAXI, GET, GO, RUN, WALK, SAUNTER, BUT GET THE BLAZES OUT OF HERE...



HIS HANDS HOVERED BEFORE HIS EYES, FLOATING, TURNING. IT WAS NOT THE HANDS AS HANDS HE WAS INTERESTED IN, NOR THE FINGERS AS FINGERS. HE FOUND INTEREST ONLY IN THE TIPS OF HIS FINGERS. THE CLOCK TICKED UPON THE MANTEL...



HE KNELT BY HUXLEY'S BODY, TOOK A HANKERCHIEF FROM HUXLEY'S POCKET AND BEGAN METHODICALLY TO SWAB HUXLEY'S THROAT WITH IT. HE BRUSHED AND MASSAGED THE FACE AND THE BACK OF THE NECK WITH A FIERCE ENERGY...



HE STOPPED. THERE WAS A MOMENT WHEN HE SAW THE ENTIRE HOUSE, THE HALLS, DOORS, FURNITURE; AND AS CLEARLY AS IF IT WERE BEING REPEATED WORD FOR WORD, HE HEARD HUXLEY TALKING AND HIMSELF TALKING JUST AS THEY HAD TALKED ONLY AN HOUR AGO...

I WANT TO SEE YOU, HUXLEY. IT'S IMPORTANT.

OH! IT'S YOU, ACTON. I DON'T SEE... WELL, ALL RIGHT, COME IN. WE CAN TALK IN THE LIBRARY.



HE HAD TOUGHED THE LIBRARY DOOR. HE HAD TOUGHED THE BOOKS AND THE LIBRARY TABLE AND TOUGHED THE BURGUNDY BOTTLE AND BURGUNDY GLASSES...



NOW, SQUATTING ON THE FLOOR BESIDE HUXLEY'S COLD BODY WITH THE POLISHING HANKERCHIEF IN HIS FINGERS, HE STARED AT THE HOUSE, THE WALLS, THE FURNITURE, STUNNED BY WHAT HE REALIZED. HE SHUT HIS EYES, WAGGING THE HANKERCHIEF IN HIS HANDS, BITING HIS LIPS WITH HIS TEETH, PULLING IN ON HIMSELF! THE FINGERPRINTS WERE EVERYWHERE!



A PAIR OF GLOVES. BEFORE HE DID ONE MORE THING, BEFORE HE POLISHED ANOTHER AREA, HE MUST HAVE A PAIR OF GLOVES. HE PUT HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS, WALKED TO THE HALL UMBRELLA STAND, THE HATRACK, HUXLEY'S OVERCOAT. HE PULLED OUT THE OVERCOAT POCKETS. NO GLOVES...



HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS AGAIN HE WALKED UPSTAIRS. HE UNTIED SEVENTY OR EIGHTY DRAWERS IN SIX UPSTAIRS ROOMS, LEFT THEM WITH TONGUES HANGING OUT. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE EIGHTY-FIFTH DRAWER HE FOUND GLOVES...



DOWN ONTO THE HARDWOOD FLOOR HAD DROPPED MR. HUXLEY, WITH WILLIAM ACTON AFTER HIM THEY HAD ROLLED AND TUSSELED AND CLAWED AT THE FLOOR PRINTING IT WITH THEIR FINGERTIPS!



GLOVED, WILLIAM ACTON RETURNED TO THE ROOM AND LABORIOUSLY BEGAN SWABBING EVERY INFESTED INCH OF THE FLOOR, INCH BY INCH, HE POLISHED TILL HE COULD MOST SEE HIS INTENT SWEATING FACE IN IT...



THEN HE CAME TO A TABLE AND POLISHED THE LEG OF IT, ITS SOLID BODY, AND ON TOP, AND HE CAME TO A BOWL OF WAX FRUIT AND HE PLUCKED OUT THE WAX FRUIT AND POLISHED THEM, LEAVING THE FRUIT AT THE BOTTOM UNPOLISHED...



AFTER RUBBING THE TABLE, HE CAME TO A PICTURE FRAME OVER IT



HE SHINED THE DOORKNOBS, CURRIED THE DOORS FROM HEAD TO FOOT. HE WENT TO ALL THE FURNITURE AND WIPED THE CHAIRS AND RUBBED THE FABRIC. FINGERPRINTS CAN BE FOUND ON FABRIC. HE WENT TO THE BODY, TURNED IT NOW THIS WAY, NOW THAT, AND BURNISHED EVERY SURFACE OF IT. HE EVEN SHINED THE SHOES, CHARGING NOTHING...



WHILE SHINING THE SHOES HIS FACE TOOK ON A LITTLE TREMOR OF WORRY, AND AFTER A MOMENT HE GOT UP AND WALKED OVER TO THAT TABLE. HE TOOK OUT AND POLISHED THE WAX FRUIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOWL...



HE WENT BACK TO THE BODY, BUT AS HE CROUCHED OVER IT, HIS EYELIDS TWICKED AND HIS JAW MOVED FROM SIDE TO SIDE AND HE DEBATED. THEN HE GOT UP AND WALKED ONCE MORE TO THE TABLE. HE POLISHED THE PICTURE FRAME...



WHILE POLISHING THE PICTURE FRAME HE DISCOVERED... *THE WALL!*



HUXLEY HAD GIVEN HIM A SHOVE AS THEY STRUGGLED. HE HAD FALLEN AGAINST ONE WALL, GOTTEN UP, TOUCHING THE WALL...



HE GLANCED AT THE FOUR WALLS...
RIDICULOUS.



FROM THE CORNERS OF HIS EYES HE SAW SOMETHING ON ONE WALL...



THERE WAS A SPOT ON THE WALL BEHIND HIM...



WELL, *WASN'T* THERE?



HE TURNED, ANGRILY, AND HE WENT OVER AND HE COULDN'T FIND ANY SPOT. OH, A *LITTLE* ONE, YES, RIGHT. *THERE*. HE DABBED IT. IT WASN'T A FINGERPRINT ANYHOW!



HE LOOKED AT THE WALL AND THE WAY IT WENT OVER TO HIS RIGHT AND OVER TO HIS LEFT AND HOW IT WENT DOWN TO HIS FEET AND UP OVER HIS HEAD AND HE SAID SOFTLY...



HE PEERED AT HIS HAND AND THE WALLPAPER. HE LOOKED OVER HIS SHOULDER AT THE OTHER ROOM. HIS FACE HARDENED. WITHOUT A WORD HE BEGAN TO SCRUB THE WALL, UP AND DOWN, BACK AND FORTH, UP AND DOWN, AS HIGH AS HE COULD STRETCH AND AS LOW AS HE COULD BEND...



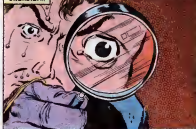
HE GOT ONE WALL FINISHED, AND THEN... HE CAME TO ANOTHER WALL. HE LOOKED AT THE MANTEL CLOCK. AN HOUR GONE. IT WAS FIVE AFTER ONE. HE TURNED AWAY FROM THIS NEW FRESH WALL...



FROM THE CORNERS OF HIS EYES HE SAW THE LITTLE WEBS. WHEN HIS BACK WAS TURNED THE LITTLE SPIDERS CAME OUT OF THE WOODWORK AND SPUN THEIR LITTLE FRAGILE HALF-INVISIBLE WEBS UPON THE THREE WALLS AS YET UNTOUCHED. EACH TIME HE STARED DIRECTLY AT THEM, THE SPIDERS POPPED BACK INTO THE WOOD-WORK ONLY TO SPINDLE OUT AS HE RETREATED...



HE WENT TO A WRITING DESK AT WHICH HUXLEY HAD BEEN SEATED EARLIER. HE OPENED A DRAWER AND TOOK OUT WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR. A LITTLE MAGNIFYING GLASS HUXLEY SOMETIMES USED FOR READING. HE TOOK THE MAGNIFIER AND APPROACHED THE WALL UNEASILY...



FINGERPRINTS!

BUT THOSE AREN'T MINE! I DIDN'T PUT THEM THERE! I'M SURE I DIDN'T! A SERVANT, A BUTLER, OR A MAID PERHAPS!



THE WALL WAS FULL OF THEM...

LOOK AT THIS ONE HERE, LONG AND TAPERED, A WOMAN'S, I'D BET ON IT!

WOULD YOU? I WOULD!

ARE YOU CERTAIN?

YES!

POSITIVE?

WELL... YES.

ABSOLUTELY?

YES, YES!

WIPE IT OUT, ANYWAY!

OK, ALL RIGHT!



IN A RAGE HE BEGAN TO SWEEP THE WALL UP AND DOWN AND BACK AND FORTH WITH HIS GLOVED HANDS, SWEATING, GRUNTING AND SWEARING, BENDING AND RISING AND GETTING REDDER OF FACE...



HE FINISHED THE WALL AT TWO O'CLOCK. HE TOOK OFF HIS COAT AND PUT IT ON A CHAIR. HE WALKED OVER TO THE BOWL AND TOOK OUT THE WAXED FRUIT AND POLISHED THE ONES AT THE BOTTOM AND POLISHED THE PICTURE FRAME. HE LOOKED UP AT THE CHANDELIER...



HIS FINGERS TWITCHED AT HIS SIDES. HIS MOUTH SLIPPED OPEN AND THE TONGUE MOVED ALONG HIS LIPS AND HE LOOKED AT THE CHANDELIER AND LOOKED AWAY AND LOOKED BACK AT THE CHANDELIER AND LOOKED AT HUXLEY'S BODY AND THEN AT THE CRYSTAL CHANDELIER WITH ITS LONG PEARLS OF RAINBOW GLASS.



HE GOT A CHAIR AND BROUGHT IT OVER UNDER THE CHANDELIER AND PUT ONE FOOT UP ON IT AND TOOK IT DOWN AND THREW THE CHAIR, VIOLENTLY, LAUGHING, INTO A CORNER. THEN HE RAN FROM THE ROOM LEAVING ONE WALL AS YET UNWASHED.



IN THE DINING ROOM HE CAME TO A TABLE. HE PAUSED OVER THE TABLE WHERE THE BOXES OF CUTLERY WERE LAID OUT, HEARING ONCE MORE HUXLEY'S VOICE...

LOOK AT THIS SILVER, ACTON.
EXQUISITE CRAFTSMANSHIP.
LOOK AT IT!



NOW ACTON WIPED THE FORKS AND SPOONS AND TOOK DOWN ALL THE PLATES AND SPECIAL CERAMIC DISHES FROM THE WALL SHELF... REMEMBERING ALL THE TOUCHINGS AND GESTURINGS...



HERE'S A LOVELY BIT OF CERAMICS BY GERTRUDE AND OTTO NATZLER, ACTON. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THEIR WORK?



PICK IT UP. TURN IT OVER. SEE THE FINE THINNESS OF THE BOWL, THIN AS EGGSHELL. INCREDIBLE. HANDLE IT. GO AHEAD. I DON'T MIND.



HANDLE IT! GO AHEAD! PICK IT UP!

ACTION SOBBED UNEVENLY. HE HURLED THE POTTERY AGAINST THE WALL. IT SHATTERED AND SPREAD, FLAKING WILDLY, UPON THE FLOOR...



AN INSTANT LATER, HE WAS ON HIS KNEES. EVERY PIECE, EVERY SHARD OF IT, MUST BE REGAINED. FOOL, FOOL, FOOL, HE CRIED TO HIMSELF. FIND EVERY PIECE, YOU IDIOT... NOT ONE FRAGMENT OF IT MUST BE LEFT BEHIND. HE GATHERED THEM...



ARE THEY ALL HERE? HE LOOKED UNDER THE TABLE AGAIN AND UNDER THE CHAIRS AND FOUND ONE MORE PIECE BY MATCH-LIGHT AND STARTED TO POLISH EACH LITTLE FRAGMENT AS IF IT WERE A PRECIOUS STONE...



HE TOOK OUT THE LINEN AND WIPED IT AND WIPED THE CHAIRS AND TABLES AND DOORKNOBS AND WINDOW-PANES AND LEDGES AND DRAPES AND WIPED THE FLOOR AND FOUND THE KITCHEN, PANTING, BREATHING VIOLENTLY, AND TOOK OFF HIS VEST AND ADJUSTED HIS GLOVES AND WIPED THE SLITTERING CHROMIUM...



AND HE WIPED ALL THE UTENSILS AND THE SILVER FAUCETS AND THE MIXING BOWLS, FOR NOW HE HAD FORGOTTEN WHAT HE HAD TOUCHED AND WHAT HE HAD NOT. HUXLEY AND HE HAD LINGERED HERE, IN THE KITCHEN, THEY HAD IDLED, TOUCHED THIS, THAT, SOMETHING ELSE, THERE WAS NO REMEMBERING WHAT OR HOW MUCH OR HOW MANY...



AND HE FINISHED THE KITCHEN AND CAME THROUGH THE HALL INTO THE ROOM WHERE HUXLEY LAY. HE CRIED OUT. HE HAD FORGOTTEN TO WASH THE FOURTH WALL OF THE ROOM. AND WHILE HE WAS GONE, THE LITTLE SPIDERS HAD COME OUT OF THE FOURTH UNWARNED WALL AND SWARMED OVER THE ALREADY CLEAN WALLS, DIRTYING THEM AGAIN! ON THE CEILING, THE CHANDELIER, IN THE CORNERS, ON THE FLOOR A MILLION LITTLE WHORLED WEBB HUNG BILLOWING AT HIS SCREAM...



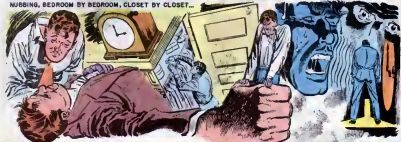
TINY, TINY LITTLE WEBB, NO BIGGER THAN, IRONICALLY YOUR... FINGER! AS HE WATCHED, THE WEBB WERE WOVEN OVER THE PICTURE FRAME, THE FRUIT BOWL, THE BODY, THE FLOOR. PRINTS WIELDED THE PAPER KNIFE, PULLED OUT DRAWERS, TOUCHED THE TABLE-TOP... TOUCHED, TOUCHED, TOUCHED EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE...



HE POLISHED THE FLOOR WILDLY, WILDLY. HE ROLLED THE BODY OVEN AND CRIED ON IT WHILE HE WASHED IT AND GOT UP AND WALKED OVER AND POLISHED THE FRUIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOWL. HE PUT A CHAIR UNDER THE CHANDELIER AND GOT UP AND POLISHED EACH LITTLE HANGING FIRE OF IT, SHAKING IT LIKE A CRYSTAL TAMBOURINE UNTIL IT TILTED BELLWISE IN THE AIR. THEN HE LEAPED OFF THE CHAIR AND GRIPPED THE DOORKNOBS AND GOT UP ON ANOTHER CHAIR AND SWABBED THE WALLS HIGHER AND HIGHER AND RAN TO THE KITCHEN AND GOT A BROOM AND WIPED THE WEBS DOWN FROM THE CEILINGS AND POLISHED THE BOTTOM FRUIT OF THE BOWL AND WASHED THE BODY AND DOORKNOBS AND SILVERWARE AND FOUND THE HALL BANISTER AND FOLLOWED THE BANISTER UPSTAIRS...



THREE O'CLOCK! THERE WERE TWELVE NOOMS DOWNSTAIRS AND EIGHT ABOVE, ONE HUNDRED CHAIRS, SIX SOFAS, TWENTY-SEVEN TABLES, SIX RADIOS, AND UNDER AND ON TOP AND BEHIND. HE YANKED FURNITURE OUT AWAY FROM WALLS AND, SOBING, WIPED THEM CLEAN OF YEARS-OLD DUST, HANDLING, ERASING, NUBBING, POLISHING, AND NOW IT WAS FOUR O'CLOCK! AND HIS ARMS ACHED AND HIS EYES WERE SWOLLEN AND STARING AND HE MOVED SLUGGISHLY ABOUT, ON STRANGE LEGS, HIS HEAD DOWN, HIS ARMS MOVING, SWABBING AND NUBBING, BEDROOM BY BEDROOM, CLOSET BY CLOSET...



THEY FOUND HIM AT SIX-THIRTY THAT MORNING, IN THE ATTIC. THE ENTIRE HOUSE WAS POLISHED TO A BRILLIANCE. THEY FOUND HIM IN THE ATTIC, POLISHING OLD TRUNKS AND OLD FRAMES AND OLD CHAIRS AND TOYS AND VASES AND ROCKING HORSES AND DUSTY CIVIL WAR COINS. HE WAS HALF THROUGH THE ATTIC WHEN THE POLICE OFFICER WALKED UP BEHIND HIM WITH A GUN...



ON THE WAY OUT OF THE HOUSE, ACTON POLISHED THE FRONT DOORKNOB WITH HIS HANDKERCHIEF, AND SLAMMED IT IN TRIUMPH!



ONE FOR THE MONEY...

ANITA STOOD BEFORE THE HUGE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT WINDOWS, STARING OUT AT THE SPRAWLING CITY BELOW HER. HER FACE WAS A SCULPTURED MASK... COLD AND EXPRESSIONLESS. AS SHE LISTENED, SHE PUFFED ON HER GOLD CIGARETTE HOLDER, SUCKING THE SMOKE IN AND BLOWING IT OUT THROUGH HEAVILY PAINTED LIPS. THE LIGHT FROM A NEARBY LAMP RIPPLED OVER HER SHEER NEGLIGEE, ACCENTING HER CURVACIOUS FIGURE. BEHIND HER, RONALD'S BROKEN VOICE DRONED ON...

I... I GUESS I BLEED THE BUSINESS DRY, ANITA! THEY CAME WITH THEIR BOOKS AND THEIR LONG LIST OF FIGURES AND THEY SHOWED ME THAT I'D PUSHED THE COMPANY INTO BANKRUPTCY!

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE BROKE, RONALD! YOUR DOUGH'S RUN OUT! IS THAT RIGHT?



Jack Kamen

HE WAS AN OLDISH MAN, GREYING AT THE TEMPLES. HIS FACE WAS POUCHY AND LINED. HIS EYES WERE DIM AND BLOODSHOT, HE NEEDED...

THAT'S ABOUT IT, ANITA BABY! I SPENT IT ALL ON YOU! I PUT YOU UP IN THIS BEAUTIFUL PENTHOUSE... BOUGHT YOU CLOTHES... JEWELRY...

THEN THIS IS IT! THE WIND-UP! THE FINISH!



RONALD STARED AT ANITA. HIS MOUTH FELL OPEN...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MONEY? THIS ISN'T THE END AT ALL! I CAN GET A JOB. THINGS WILL BE TIGHT FOR A FEW YEARS, BUT WE'LL HAVE EACH OTHER!

HAH! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH, RONALD! IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO GIVE UP ALL THIS... AND MOVE BACK DOWN THERE... TO THE RAT-HOLES...





BUT I CAN'T AFFORD THIS PLACE NOW, ANITA! I...

THEN I'LL FIND SOMEBODY WHO CAN AFFORD IT!

ANITA! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WE... LOVE EACH OTHER!

I NEVER LOVED YOU, YOU CHUMP! I LOVED THIS... THE DOUGH! NOW THAT THE DOUGH'S RUN OUT, I'LL FIND ME ANOTHER SUCKER!

ANITA! MY GOD! YOU... YOU MADE ME DIVORCE HELEN! YOU PROMISED YOU'D MARRY ME...

IT WAS ALL IN THE GAME, BUSTER! NOW WHY DON'T YOU RUN ALONG? HUH?

HE STOOD UP, HIS TONGUE CURLED ACROSS DRY LIPS. HE LOOKED AT HER WITH WET EYES. SHE TURNED AWAY, GAZED OUT OF THE WINDOW, AND SUCKED ON HER CIGARETTE...

I'LL... I'LL GET MY THINGS... FROM THE... DRAWER!

SUIT YOURSELF! ONLY MAKE IT SNAPPY, HUN? I WANT TO GET DRESSED!



HE STUMBLERD ACROSS THE LUXURIOUS LIVING ROOM INTO THE BEDROOM AND SLAMMED THE DOOR. SHE CURSED HIM UNDER HER BREATH. NEXT TIME SHE'D BE A LITTLE MORE CAREFUL WHOM SHE PICKED. SUDDENLY...



THE GOLD CIGARETTE HOLDER DROPPED FROM HER MOUTH. SHE DARTED TO THE BEDROOM DOOR AND FLUNG IT OPEN. THE ACID SMELL OF GUNPOWDER FILLED THE ROOM. A TINY WHISP OF SMOKE CURLED UP FROM THE MUZZLE OF THE .45 HE HELD IN HIS HAND. HE SAT ON THE BED, STARING AT HER WITH BLIND EYES. BLOOD TRICKLING FROM THE HOLE IN HIS TEMPLE...



RONALD! CHOKE...

AND THEN HE PITCHED FORWARD, SPRAWLING OFF THE BED ONTO THE FLOOR AT HER FEET. HE WAS DEAD? SHE LOOKED DOWN AT HIM AND SMIRKED...



SUCKER...

IT WAS HER OLD STAMPING GROUND. IT HAD PAID OFF BEFORE. IT COULD PAY OFF AGAIN ANITA SAT AT THE BAR, NURSING HER DRINK, IGNORING THE BARTENDER'S DIRTY LOOKS. IT WAS HERE THAT SHE'D FIRST 'MET' RONALD. NOW RONALD WAS DEAD. ANITA'S MEAL TICKET HAD BEEN ALL PUNCHED OUT. SHE HAD TO FIND ANOTHER



ANITA WAS JUST ABOUT READY TO GIVE UP IN DISGUST WHEN THE OLD WOMAN CAME IN. SHE LOOKED AROUND SELF-CONSCIOUSLY AND SAT DOWN AT A BOOTH. SHE LOOKED ABOUT SIXTY...TIMID AND SHY. NOT THE TYPE ONE WOULD EXPECT TO FIND IN AN ESTABLISHMENT LIKE THAT.



ANITA STUDIED HER. SHE WAS WELL DRESSED. SHE WORE A LARGE DIAMOND RING ON ONE HAND AND A SPARKLING BRACELET ON HER WRIST. WHEN THE BARTENDER SERVED THE LEMONADE, SHE OPENED HER BAG AND TOOK OUT A WALLET FILLED WITH GREEN BILLS...



ANITA GASPED. THIS OLD BAT WAS LOADED. WHAT WAS SHE DOING IN A JOINT LIKE THIS? ANITA SLIPPED OFF HER BAR STOOL AND APPROACHED HER.



ANITA SLID ONTO THE BOOTH BENCH OPPOSITE THE OLD WOMAN...



ANITA SMILED...
ALL RIGHT... HARRIET! SAY, WHAT'S A WOMAN LIKE YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS... ANYWAY?



ANITA THOUGHT OF MRS. WALKER'S THICK WILLET CRAMMED WITH BIG BILLS...





ERIC?
MY SON! BUT I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT IT. TELL ME ABOUT YOU, MY CHILD!



NOTHING TO TELL, HARRIET! I'M JUST A LONELY GIRL MYSELF!
YOU'RE A VERY LOVELY GIRL, ANITA! THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO BE LONELY!



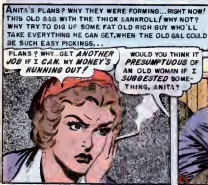
YOU'RE VERY KIND, HARRIET! BUT, WELL... I NEVER MET THE RIGHT MAN, I GUESS!
YOU WOULD HAVE LIKED ERIC SIX YEARS AGO! HE...



YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK ABOUT IT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO, HARRIET!
WHAT DO YOU DO, ANITA? I MEAN... FOR A LIVING?



WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT I'M UNEMPLOYED AT THE PRESENT TIME! MY LAST... ER... EMPLOYER RECENTLY WENT BROKE AND I LOST MY... POSITION!
OH! THAT'S TOO BAD! I'M SORRY! WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?



ANITA'S PLANS? WHY THEY WERE FORMING... RIGHT NOW? THIS OLD SAG WITH THE THICK BANKROLL/ WHY NOT? WHY TRY TO DIG UP SOME FAT OLD RICH GUY WHO'LL TAKE EVERYTHING HE CAN GET, WHEN THE OLD GAL COULD BE SUCH EASY PICKINGS...
PLANS? WHY... GET ANOTHER JOB IF I CAN. MY MONEY'S RUNNING OUT!



W-NOT GO RIGHT AHEAD!
I LIKE YOU, ANITA! YOU SEEM LIKE A NICE GIRL! I'M LONELY AND I HAVE MONEY! HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME MY PAID COMPANION? LIVE WITH ME?...

WOULD YOU THINK IT PRESUMPTUOUS OF AN OLD WOMAN IF I SUGGESTED SOMETHING, ANITA?

WHAT A CHANCE! THE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT WAS GONE! ANITA'D ALREADY DECIDED TO TRY AND MILK THE OLD GAL, AND NOW HERE SHE WAS... ASKING FOR IT! ASKING ANITA TO COME AND LIVE WITH HER! WHAT A CHANCE...



A PAID COMPANION! LIVE WITH YOU! BUT...

I'D MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE, ANITA! AND HAVING YOU AROUND WOULD MAKE ME SO HAPPY!

ALL RIGHT, HARRIET! IT SOUNDS WONDERFUL! I'LL TAKE THE JOB!



GOOD! WHEN CAN YOU START?

IT WAS GOING TO BE SO EASY! LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY! SHE'D GO AND LIVE WITH THE OLD WOMAN, WORK INTO HER GOOD GRACES, AND END UP WITH ALL HER DOUGH...

WHY, RIGHT NOW! I'LL GET MY THINGS! I LIVE IN THE HOTEL UP THE BLOCK!



GOOD! I'LL WAIT HERE! HERE'S SOME MONEY TO PAY YOUR BILL!

ANITA TOOK THE FIFTY! SHE HURRIED TO HER HOTEL ROOM! SO EASY! SO VERY EASY...

I'M CHECKING OUT! WHAT DO I OWE... THAT'LL BE THIRTY-TWO FIFTY, MISS SHELBY! ANY... FORWARDING ADDRESS?



I'LL LET YOU KNOW! SO LONG!



GOOD-BYE, MISS SHELBY! GOOD LUCK!

GOOD LUCK?! YES, ANITA WAS HAVING GOOD LUCK! THIS TIME THERE'D BE NO PAWING CIGAR-SMOKING MALE TO TOLERATE AND PLEASE, YES, THIS WAS LUCK...



OKAY, HARRIET! LET'S GO!

COME, MY DEAR! I HAVE A CAB WAITING!

HARRIET GAVE THE CAR DRIVER THE ADDRESS. IT WAS OVER ON THE SWANK EAST SIDE. ANITA SAT BACK AND SMILED...



WHY... YOU'RE SMILING, ANITA!

I WAS JUST THINKING HOW LUCKY I AM, HARRIET!

THE TRIP TOOK SOME TIME. CROSSTOWN TRAFFIC WAS SLOW. ANITA FOUND A GOOD OPENING AND BEGAN TO PRY...

YOUR HUSBAND MUST HAVE LEFT YOU VERY WELL OFF, THEN!

HE MADE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY! WE HAD EVERYTHING! WHEN HE DIED, HE LEFT US ALMOST HALF A MILLION!



USPOH! ERIC...

YES, ERIC! ERIC WAS FIFTEEN WHEN MY HUSBAND DIED! MY, HOW I SPOILED THE BOY! HE GOT EVERYTHING HE WANTED! EVERYTHING! AND THEN, SIX YEARS AGO...



THE CAB STOPPED

IS THIS IT?

EH? OH! YES, MY DEAR! HOW MUCH WILL THAT BE, DRIVERS?



IT WAS ONE OF THOSE FAST-DISAPPEARING EAST-SIDE MANSIONS SET BACK IN THE SHADOWS OF THE TOWERING APARTMENT HOUSES THAT HAD SPRUNG UP AROUND IT. THEY CLIMBED THE STEPS...

IT'S BEAUTIFUL, HARRIET!

NOT ANY MORE! IT USED TO BE BEAUTIFUL, BUT NOT ANY MORE!



THE OLD WOMAN FUMBLING IN HER PURSE FOR HER KEY! HER DIAMOND RING SPARKLED! ANITA STARED AT IT! SOMEDAY THAT RING WAS GOING TO BE HERS. SHE FELT HER FACE FLUSH...

AH! HERE WE ARE! THERE!

THEN... THEN YOU'RE ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD NOW, HARRIET?



THE HUGE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT BEHIND THEM. THEY STOOD IN THE SHADOWED MARBLE FOYER. ANITA HEARD THE LOCK SNAP INTO PLACE.

ALL ALONE? OH, NO! WHY, THERE'S ME... AND ERIC!

ERIC? BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID HE DIED SIX YEARS AGO!



SOMETHING MOVED IN THE DARKNESS BEYOND THE FOYER. SOMETHING DRAGGED ITSELF TOWARD THEM...

I SAID I LOST ERIC, ANITA! I DIDN'T SAY HE DIED!

MOTHER? IS... THAT... YOU...?



HE CAME OUT OF THE SHADOWS! HE WAS HUGE AND UGLY! HIS HAIR HUNG OVER HIS PERSPIRED BROW, HIS MASSIVE ARMS HUNG AT HIS SIDES, HIS EYES BURNED LIKE WHITE-HOT COALS AND A DROP OF SPITTLE OZZED FROM HIS MOUTH AND DOWN HIS UNSHAVEN CHIN...

THIS IS ERIC, MY DEAR! SIX YEARS AGO HE WAS A NORMAL TWENTY-FOUR YEAR OLD WITH EVERYTHING TO LIVE FOR! AND THEN HE FELL IN LOVE... FELL IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN WHO WANTED HIM ONLY FOR HIS MONEY...

CHOKES... YOU... YOU BROUGHT HER, MOTHER!

HE MOVED TOWARD ANITA...

HER NAME WAS NORMA! SHE USED HER LOVELY BODY TO LURE HIM TO BREAK HIS HEART! HE HAD A MENTAL BREAKDOWN! WENT COMPLETELY MAD...

NORMA! NO! NO! NORMA...

AND SO, EVERY YEAR ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ERIC'S 'LOSS', I HAVE TO BRING HIM A BEAUTIFUL GIRL LIKE NORMA SO THAT HE CAN HAVE HIS REVENGE...

NORMA! DON'T TOUCH ME!

...SO THAT HE CAN MUTILATE HER BODY THE WAY NORMA MUTILATED HIS MIND!

NO! NO! OH, LORD!

AND TODAY I'VE BROUGHT HIM YOU!

EEEEEEEE

THE END

The CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Welcome, horror and suspensory fanatics, to the first of my newly reinstated columns. After being locked up in the *Crypt of Terror* for the last thirty-five years, it feels good to stretch my legs again. (No, V.K.! Not on your new rack! Chee...)

Anyways...I notice, to my chagrin, that no one has written to me in, well, a L-O-O-ONG time. So you know what I'm going to do? (What's that? Entertain you with a brand new story, you say? NAW! That'd be too much like WORK.) I'm gonna cop out and dig up some of my old letters and run 'em again. Sorta give you an idea of what the fans thought of me in the bad old days. After all, if you like my stories about mouldy old corpses, you oughta love these mouldy old letters.

For this issue's offering, I thought I'd share with you what my original readers thought about the copy of *Tales From the Crypt* you just enjoyed. And after you've read their thoughts, why don't you wrack your fevered #1 brains and come up with some comments of your own? Let me know what you latter-day unleashed fiends think of my fright rag. Now, on with the letters:

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

Your origin story, "Lower Berth," was tops in nauses. So THAT'S where you came from! WOW! How horrible can you get?

Stuart Glass
Lynbrook, N.Y.

...I almost chewed my claws off reading "Lower Berth."

Nidred, the Were-cat
Salisbury, N.C.

...In the title, "Lower Berth," didn't you mean to spell the second word "Birth"?

Astute Observer
Bloomington, Ind.

No, Astute, I didn't mean to spell "Berth" "Birth"...but I wanted "Berth" to mean "Birth"...get what I mean? I mean...*(OH, SHUT UP! Get on with the column, if you know what WE mean!—ed.)* Oooooh, you're so mean! *(That's what we mean!—ed.)*

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I'm getting a big kick out of those Grim Fairy Tales. "The Funeral" was the greatest!

Dick Mandel
Boston, Mass.

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I'm thoroughly convinced that E.C. magazines are of the highest quality money can buy. There is not another comic on the stands today that can compare, even in part, with the high standards maintained by your magazine. Being a fifth year art student, I am constantly critical of comic art, and in my estimation, the artwork in your books rates supreme.

Roger A. Nippress
Bridgeport, Mich.

...I would go over Niagara Falls WITHOUT a barrel for an E.C. magazine.

Fred Barth
Peoria, Ill.

How touching. I tell you, when I think of my delightfully deranged fan(atic)s of yore, I get fees in my eyes!

And now, here's some original commentary on this issue's *Crime SuspensStories* offering:

Dear Editors,

In *Crime SuspensStories* No. 17, I especially enjoyed the way you intermingled the two narratives. ONE FOR THE MONEY, and TWO FOR THE SHOW. As usual, not knowing what to expect till the ending of the latter, I was completely taken by surprise. I sincerely hope that you'll pull a switch like that again.

David S. Spiel
Milton, Mass.

...I've read many a different, cunning, and interesting story in your mags, but those two just about top them all...

Allan Katz
Kew Gardens, L.I.

...I fear, gentlemen, you have made a mistake. Mother always sends their bodies to Kalamazoo...not Peoria. Oh, goodie! She's brought me another surprise! So if you'll excuse me...*NORMA! NORMA!*

Art "Eric" Walker
Binghamton, N.Y.

Dear Editors,

I would jump off the Empire State Building for an E.C. magazine.

John Reid
Hollywood, Calif.

We suppose you expect US to pay your plane fare seat! But seriously, John...don't jump off the Empire State Building...jump on your newsdealer! He'll be glad to sell you an E.C.

Dear Editors,

I just don't know what to say. I wonder how you can keep on publishing such good stories. I'm afraid you're going to run out. If you do, I'll just stop reading comics. Because E.C. are THE ONLY comics!

G. W. Sheridan
Gainesville, Ga.

Ah, memories! And I fully expect to collect a whole batch of new ones from you modern, 1990s kinda readers. So find yourselves a cozy, clammy nook, pick up your poison pens, and WRITE already!

For the second part of this month's putrid ramblings, I'd like to acquaint and resacquaint you beady-eyed perusers with the part of my column that's always been nearest my tender old heart. (That's it...up there on the shelf in the most tenderizer! Gettin' tenderer every day!) I'm referring to the section wherein I used to list the titles of popular songs, movies and et cetera of the day...but titles that my readers had, heh heh, transmogrified with a scream-theme in mind. Here are some examples, starting with these horrific song titles:

BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL GROUND EYES
AFTER THE MAUL IS OVER
I BELIEVE (THAT FOR EVERY DROP OF BLOOD
THAT FALLS, A VAMPIRE GROWS)
WITH A TONG IN MY HEART
I'M SLITTING BY THE WINDOW (WATCHING THE
BLOOD-DROPS FALL)
THE SQUEAL OF TORTURE
I'M WINGING WITH SPEARS IN MY THIGHS
RATTLE HYMN OF THE REPULSIVE
ON THE TAINTED SIDE OF THE MEAT
WHO'S GORY NOW?
DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEX
YOU'D BE SO NICE TO COME GROAN TO
THE GIRL THAT I BURY
SEND ME ONE DOZEN NOSES
JUINE IS GUSHING OUT ALL OVER
HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY THAT I LOATHE YOU?
GHOULS RUSH IN WHEN HUMAN BEINGS ARE
DEAD
LET'S HAVE ANOTHER CUT OF COFFIN, (AND
LET'S HAVE ANOTHER PIECE OF EYE)
RED LIVER VALLEY
DON'T LET THE BLOOD GET IN YOUR EYES
(DON'T LET THE CRUD CAKE IN YOUR
HEART)
I'M BACK IN THE COFFIN AGAIN (OUT WHERE
A FIEND IS A FIEND)
STAKE ME OUT IN THE BALL PARK

These additions to our LURID LITERATURE LIBRARY were sent along by Jimmy Crow of Dallas, Texas; Jimmy Teel of Pineville, W. Va.; and Drury Moroz of Springfield, Ill.:

SQUISH FAMILY ROBINSON
WITHERING SIGHTS
HOW GREEN WAS MY SALLY
THE LASH OF THE MOHICANS
THE GIZZARD OF OOZE
ROMEO...THE GHOUL HE ET!
LORNA'S DOOM

Darrel Gould of Grand Lake Stream, Maine and Sue Campbell and Amelia Alexander of Waynesville, N.C. came up with these MORBID MOVIES:

A STREETCAR MAIMED MY SIRE
THE AFRICAN'S SPLEEN
HIGH STREWN
THE GREATEST CHOKE ON EARTH
WRING SOLOMON'S SPINE

So, now that you've read all this dire doggerel, maybe you're feeling inclined to come up with some of your own loathsome titles. If so, the Vult-Keeper, the Old Witch, and I would love to see 'em...so send 'em on in...but keep in mind that us coots are now more than 100 years old and we haven't been let out of our tombs lately—so we're not hep to some of this modern trash you kids call entertainment. So let us know what the real titles are, okay?

Send your song, movie and book titles, your poems and lyrics, your proverbs and (thought I'd forgotten, didn't you?) your letters of comment to me:

Here are some poems, the first by Michael Britekant of N.Y.C.:

*Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet,
Watching the ghouls at play
When along came a vampire and sat
down beside her
And sucked all her blood away*

And this one from Michael Graziano of Babylon, L.I.:

*When I was young, I killed four people
And hid them in an old church steeple
I'd seen them sleeping in their beds,
Raised my hammer, and smashed their heads.
When their bodies were found in the church,
The police started a nine-state search
That was back in May of '43
But they never have located me
(The reason that I beat the law
Is that I died a year before!)*

Leoniece Beer submitted this one:

*Down by the old mill stream
Where I first clawed you
You were sixteen
You let out a scream
You'll never be seventeen...*

A chap by the name of "Unsigned" from Chicago composed:

*A vampire took me home one night
To drink some blood and dine...
But it came as quite a shock to learn
The blood we drank was mine!*

And finally, a suggestion for a new department...PUTRID PROVERBS...was submitted by Herbert Teich, along with a few inspiring thought-provokers:

*There's no ghoul like an old ghoul.
Vampires who live in glass coffins shouldn't throw
stakes.
Never put off till tomorrow who you can drain
today.
Don't count your pickin's before they're
hatched.
Late to rise and late to bed, means you're a
vampire and ought to be dead.
A stitch in time saves blood.
One man's person is another man's meat.*

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FIRED!

PATRICIA GIBSON, OWNER OF THE GIRGLE-DIAMOND, OPENED THE DOOR OF THE RANCH HOUSE IN ANSWER TO THE HEAVY KNOCK. ROY WILLIS, ONE OF THE HIRED HANDS, STOOD OUTSIDE ON THE PORCH, HAT IN HAND...



WHY, ROY? WHY AREN'T YOU OUT ON THE RANGE WITH THE BOYS?

I WANTED TO SPEAK TO YOU, MA'AM! MAY I... COME IN!

HE WAS TALL AND BROAD-SHOULDERED, AND HIS WINDSWEEPED BLACK HAIR FELL IN A DURLD SNOOK OVER HIS PERSPIRING BROW. HE AMBLED TOWARD PATRICIA, HIS EYES TRAVELING OVER HER...

PATRICIA LOOKED AWAY. SHE STEPPED ASIDE, ALLOWING ROY TO PASS HER...



OF COURSE, ROY! COME IN! WHAT IS IT?

I BEEN MEANIN' TO SPEAK TO YOU FOR *SOME TIME*, MA'AM! THIS *MORNIN'*, WHEN I NOTICED YOU *LOOKIN'* AT ME, I MADE UP MY MIND THAT IT WAS *TIME!*



I DIDN'T *MEAN* TO STARE AT YOU LIKE THAT, ROY! I'M *SORRY*...

I'M NOT, MA'AM! I WAS *HOPING*... WELL... THAT I WASN'T *MISTAKEN* ABOUT WHAT I *SAW* IN YOUR EYES, THIS *MORNIN'*!

HE STOOD OVER HER. SHE TURNED TO HIM...

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU SAW, ROY?

I... I THOUGHT IT WAS THE LOOK OF A WOMAN WHO WANTED A MAN REAL BAD, NA'AM! THIS MAN...

SHE STARED AT THE FLOOR, HER FACE FLUSHING. ROY MOVED CLOSER...

THAT'S A RATHER BRAZEN THOUGHT, ROY!

TELL ME IT ISN'T TRUE, AND I'LL GO, NA'AM!

HIS BIG HANDS WERE ON HER ARMS NOW. HE HELD HER, LOOKING INTO HER EYES...

WHAT IF I TOLD YOU IT WERE TRUE, ROY? THAT I'VE LOOKED AT YOU EVERY DAY SINCE YOU GAVE TO THE GIRLLE-DIAMOND. AND WANTED YOU! WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO YOU?

PAT! WE'VE BEEN SUCH FOOLS! WE'VE WASTED SO MUCH TIME!

AND NOW HIS ARMS WERE AROUND HER, PULLING HER TOWARD HIM...

ROY! DARLINS...

PAT...

OUTSIDE THE RANCH HOUSE, ROY'S HORSE WHINNIED AND PAWED THE GROUND. FAR AWAY, A GOLF'S GRY OF PAIN DRIFTED ACROSS THE STILL AIR. IN THE RANCH HOUSE, ROY STOOD UP. PAT LOOKED UP AT HIM FROM THE SOFA...

I GOTTA GO, PAT! THE BOYS ARE WAITIN' ON ME OUT THERE! THEY GOT SOME CALVES TIED AND READY FOR BRANDIN'!

DON'T GO, ROY! THE BOYS CAN WAIT. STAY HERE FOR AWHILE...

ROY SHOOK HIS HEAD...

CAN'T, PAT! IT AIN'T FAIR! NOW, IF I WERE FOREMAN HERE... RUNNIN' THE SHOW... I COULD DO AS I PLEASE! I COULD STAY IF I WANTED TO!

IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT, ROY? TO BE FOREMAN OF THE GIRLLE-DIAMOND?

ROY NODDED AND SAT DOWN. PAT PUT HER GHEEK AGAINST HIS LIPS...

IF IT'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY, ROY, THE JOB IS YOURS! ALL I ASK IS... YOU KEEP ME HAPPY... IN RETURN!

IT'LL BE A PLEASURE, PAT! A REAL PLEASURE...

THE SUMMER WANED AND ROUND-UP TIME CAME TO THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND. THE STEERS WERE HERDED AND DRIVEN FROM THE GRAZING LANDS TO THE CORRALS...

THAT DOGGIE'S STRAYIN', TIM!

I'LL BRING 'ER IN LINE, ROY!



THE CATTLE DESTINED FOR THE SLAUGHTER HOUSES WERE SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF THE HERD AND DRIVEN EASTWARD. THE YOUNG CALVES BORN OUT ON THE RANGE WERE BRANDED...

MISS PAT WANTS TO SEE YOU, ROY!

OKAY, TIM! HELP THE BOYS, HERE, HUH?

HOLD 'EM, NEO!



AND THEN WINTER MOVED IN... BLEAK AND COLD. AROUND THE POP-BELLIED STOVE IN THE BUNKHOUSE, THE HANDS WOULD GATHER EACH EVENING...

LOOK! THERE GOES ROY... CUTTIN' CROSS THE YARD TO TW' HOUSE.

FOREMAN! BAN! JUS' 'CAUSE HE'S GOT BIG BROAD SHOULDERS AND A HANDSOME FACE...

HOLD YER TONGUE! IF HE HEARS YUH, YOU'LL BE LOOKIN' FOR ANOTHER JOB!



AND ALL THROUGH THE LONG WINTER...

NICE HERE BY THE FIRE, HUH, ROY? YEAH! COZY...



BUT LONG WINTERS MEAN MORE THAN JUST COLD WEATHER. LONG WINTERS MEAN BOREDOM...

WHERE YOU GOIN', ROY?

INTO TOWN! ANY OBJECTIONS?

N-NO! YOU CAN GO INTO TOWN WHENEVER YOU WANT! ANYTHING WRONG?

JUST WANT A CHANGE OF SCENE, THAT'S ALL! I'M TAKIN' THE CAR!



ALL RIGHT, ROY! I'LL WAIT UP FOR YOU!

DON'T BOTHER!



ROY SPED OFF AND PAT WATCHED THE YELLOW CLOUD OF DUST DISAPPEAR INTO THE GATHERING TWILIGHT, HER EYES FILLING WITH TEARS. THAT NIGHT... IN TOWN...



SHE WAS PAINTED AND CHEAP-LOOKING... THE TYPE THAT COULD RELIEVE BOREDOM...



ROY'S TRIPS TO TOWN THAT WINTER BECAME MORE AND MORE FREQUENT, HE SAW LESS AND LESS OF PAT...



AND HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH AMY BECAME WARMER AND WARMER...



AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, IN A ROOM OVER THE SALOON WHERE AMY WORKED...

ROY, HONEY! WHEN ARE WE GOIN' T'GET MARRIED? YOU BEEN PROMISIN'!

SOON, BABY! SOON...

SO...

IT WAS PAT. SHE'D FOLLOWED ROY TO TOWN. SHE STOOD IN THE DOORWAY, HER EYES BLAZING...

SO THIS IS HOW YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING YOUR NIGHTS IN TOWN!

PAT! YOU GOT A NERVE BUSTIN' IN HERE LIKE THIS! GET OUT!

WHO'S SHE, ROY?

PATRICIA GIBSON'S MY NAME, HONEY. DIDN'T ROY TELL YOU ABOUT ME?

GET OUT, PAT! I'LL SEE YOU WHEN I GET BACK TO THE RANCH!

WHAT ABOUT HER, ROY?

TELL HER, ROY! TELL HER ABOUT US!

I SAID GET OUT, PAT!

I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU HAD NO TIES, ROY!

HAN! THAT'S A LAUGH! HE'S ALL MINE, HONEY... AND NOBODY'S TAKIN' HIM AWAY FROM ME...

SHE'S CRAZY, ANY!

YOU'D BETTER LEAVE, AND YOU CAN TAKE HIM WITH YOU!

AMY SLAMMED THE DOOR, ROY AND PAT STOOD OUTSIDE IN THE HALL SHADOWS...

THAT WASN'T NICE OF YOU, ROY... TELLING AMY YOU HAD NO TIES...

I DON'T, I STILL DON'T!

I DON'T BELONG TO ANYBODY, PAT! NEITHER YOU... NOR AMY! I TAKE WHAT I GET! IT'S A BIG RANGE AND I GRAZE WHERE THE GRASS IS GREENEST! NOW I GUESS IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GIT MOVIN'! I'LL GO BACK TO THE RANCH WITH YOU AND GET MY THINGS...

ALL RIGHT, ROY! LET'S GO...

THE BOYS IN THE BUNK HOUSE WATCHED ROY AS HE PACKED HIS CLOTHES...



LEAVIN', ROY?

YEP! NOBODY'S GOIN' TO HOG-TIE ME!

PAT CALLED TO HIM FROM THE RANCH HOUSE AS HE WALKED PAST...

ROY! BEFORE YOU GO... 'TAIN'T NO USE, PAT! I'M THROUGH...



YOU FORGOT SOMETHIN', ROY!

YEAH? WHAT?



ROY CAME INTO THE RANCH HOUSE. PAT CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM AND SILENTLY LOCKED IT AS ROY LOOKED AROUND...



WHAT'D I FORGET, PAT?

YOU FORGOT OUR DEAL, ROY! I MADE YOU FOREMAN, AND YOU GOT WHAT YOU WANTED! YOU'RE MINE, ROY! YOU CAN'T BACK OFF NOW... NOT AFTER ALL I'VE GIVEN YOU...

THE BLAZE IN THE FIREPLACE BURNED BRISKLY...



OH, NO, PAT! YOU GOT NO HOLD ON ME! WE'RE NOT MARRIED! REMEMBER? I CAN PULL OUT ANYTIME! THERE'S NOTHIN' SAYS I'M YOURS! NOTHIN'...

OH, YES THERE IS, ROY!

PAT DARTED TO THE FIREPLACE...SNATCHING THE BLACK HANDLE FROM THE FLAMES, THE DESIGN GLOWED WHITE-HOT...



THIS SAYS YOU'RE MINE! IT'S MY BRAND! THE GIRCLE-DIAMOND!

PAT! NO! MY GOD! PUT THAT DOWN! EEAAAGH!

WHEN THE BUNK HOUSE BOYS FINALLY BROKE INTO THE RANCH HOUSE, THEY FOUND PATRICIA GIBSON SOB-BING HYSTERICALLY, THE COOLING IRON IN HER HANDS! AND ON ROY'S FACE WAS THE BLISTERED AND CHARRED RESULTS OF HER WORK...



GOOD LORD! CHOKO!

THE END

...TWO FOR THE SHOW!

THE STORM BREWED. ITS THUNDER WAS THE HAMMERING ROAR OF A POUNDING HEART. ITS LIGHTNING WAS THE FLASH OF HATE IN GLAZED EYES. THE STORM CARRIED WITH IT, IN SWIRLING CLOUDS OF EMOTION, THE CRASHING FURY OF MURDER. THE STORM CROUCHED IN THE CELLAR, READY TO LEASH FORTH ITS ANGRY FORCE, ITS SCREAMING DOWNPOUR. IT CROUCHED IN THE CELLAR AND BOILED AS THE CELLAR DOOR OPENED. IT ROSE UP, BLACK AND FOREBODING, AS SHE CAME DOWN THE CREAKING WOODEN STAIRS. AND THEN, AS SHE REACHED THE BOTTOM, THE STORM BROKE...

HARRY! MY GOD! EEEEEEEEEEE...



ELDER

SHE WAS DEAD. HARRY STOOD OVER HER, THE DRIPPING HATCHET HANGING LIMPLY, DEEP DOWN INSIDE HIM, THE LAST FAINT ECHO OF THE STORM DIED AWAY AND A CALM DESCENDED. THE THUNDER IN HIS HEART WAS GONE... THE LIGHTNING IN HIS EYES DIMMED...

IT... IT'S DONE, SARAH. IT'S... DONE...



THERE WAS A PEACE IN HARRY NOW... AS IF A GREAT BLACK CLOUD HAD BEEN SWEEP AWAY AND THE SUN WAS AT LAST SHINING ON HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME. AND THERE WAS COOLNESS THERE... THE COOLNESS OF A DETERMINED MAN... A MAN WHO'D FREED HIMSELF FROM THE FIRES OF HATE. HE TOOK THE SHOVEL AND BEGAN TO DIG...

I'LL BURY YOU, SARAH... HERE... IN THE GELLAR. I'LL BURY YOU AND THEN I'LL REPORT YOU MISSING. I'LL TELL THEM YOU WENT AWAY AND NEVER CAME BACK...



THE HOLE IN THE CELLAR YAWNED HUNGRILY. HARRY FED IT SARAH'S BODY, AND THE BLACKNESS GULPED IT DOWN...

IN... YOU... SO...



THEN THE BLACK MOUTH SHUT ON SARAH AS HARRY SHOVELED THE DIRT BACK INTO THE HOLE. HE SPREAD THE EXCESS DIRT AROUND AND TAMPED IT DOWN...

THERE! FINISHED...



HARRY CARRIED THE SHOVEL AND AXE UP THE CELLAR STAIRS INTO THE KITCHEN. HE TURNED ON THE SINK-TAP AND THE WATER SPLASHED FROM THE CHROME FAUCET. FIRST... HE RINSED THE BLOOD FROM THE HATCHET...



NEXT... HE FLUSHED THE SOIL FROM THE SHOVEL AND LET IT WASH DOWN THE DRAIN. THEN... HE TOOK THEM BOTH OUT TO THE TOOL SHED AND PUT THEM ON THEIR PROPER HOOKS...

ABOUT MIDNIGHT, I'LL CALL THE POLICE. I'LL TELL THEM SARAH DIDN'T COME HOME FROM WORK TONIGHT...



HARRY WENT BACK INSIDE AND SAT DOWN IN HIS FAVORITE CHAIR. HE PICKED UP THE EVENING PAPER, LIT HIS PIPE, AND BEGAN TO READ. IT WAS AS IF NO STORM HAD EVER LASHED OUT THAT NIGHT. IT WAS AS IF NOTHING HAD EVER HAPPENED...



AT MIDNIGHT, HARRY MADE HIS CALL. HE ACTED UPSET...

THAT'S RIGHT, SARAH JAMESON, 125 ELM. SHE... SHE **HASN'T COME HOME FROM WORK. NO!** NO, SHE **DIDN'T GO TO A MOVIE!** SHE WOULD HAVE TOLD ME! NO, SHE'S **NOT VISITING!** IT'S **AFTER MIDNIGHT!** SHE **NEVER** STAYS OUT THIS LATE! WHAT? YOU'LL PUT OUT AN **ALARM?** GOOD, YOU'LL STOP BY **THE MORNING?** ALL **RIGHT.**



IN THE MORNING, THE DETECTIVE CAME. HARRY WAS READY...

I... I THOUGHT SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HER, OFFICER. I'M **SORRY**, BUT **AFTER** I SPOKE TO YOU, I WENT TO **BED**. I FOUND THIS **NOTE...** ON MY **PILLOW**. SHE... SHE'S **LEFT ME!**



THE DETECTIVE READ THE NOTE HARRY HAD CAREFULLY FORGED. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD...

WELL... THIS KIND OF THING HAPPENS EVERY DAY, MR. JAMESON. MAYBE SHE'LL COME BACK. WHO KNOWS...

I. I HOPE SO. I. I GUESS I WAS A THOUGHTLESS HUSBAND. I NEVER DREAMED SHE'D... SOB...



MIND IF I LOOK AROUND, MR. JAMESON... AS LONG AS I'M HERE?

NOT AT ALL! GO RIGHT AHEAD.



THE DETECTIVE OPENED THE BEDROOM CLOSET DOOR. HARRY HAD FORSEEN THAT. HE'D BURNED SARAH'S CLOTHES IN THE FURNACE

AFTER I READ THE NOTE, I LOOKED IN HERE. I SAW SHE'D PACKED HER THINGS...

HMMM... YES, I SEE...



HARRY OPENED SARAH'S BUREAU DRAWER...

HER UNDERTHINGS... EVERYTHING... GONE. SHE MUST HAVE COME HOME FROM WORK AND PACKED AND LEFT BEFORE I GOT HOME...

LOOKS THAT WAY...



THE DETECTIVE SNOOPED AROUND SOME MORE. HE SEEMED SATISFIED. HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE WHEN HE STOPPED AT THE OPEN BATHROOM DOOR. HE STARED IN. HARRY FELT A SUDDEN CHILL...

THAT'S FUNNY!

WHAT'S THAT, OFFICER?



THE DETECTIVE WENT TO THE RACK ABOVE THE SINK. HE POINTED AT THE TWO TOOTHBRUSHES...

MRS. JAMESON'S?

HUH? OH, YES! SHE... SHE MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN IT!



THE DETECTIVE SHOOK HIS HEAD. HE LOOKED AT HARRY. HE LOOKED AT HIM HARD...

FOR A WOMAN WHO PACKED SO CAREFULLY... TO FORGET HER TOOTHBRUSH, MR. JAMESON? I HARDLY THINK SO!

I. I DON'T UNDERSTAND, SIR! WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT?



THE DETECTIVE GRIMACED

I HAVE A FEELING, MR. JAMESON... A FEELING THAT SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE. IF YOU DON'T MIND, I THINK WE'LL INVESTIGATE YOUR WIFE'S SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE AFTER ALL.

WHY... WHY OF COURSE, OFFICER. GO RIGHT AHEAD...

...AND WHEN YOU FIND HER, TELL HER I'M SORRY... TELL HER TO COME BACK TO ME... TELL HER I NEED HER. WILL YOU?

YEAH, MR. JAMESON. SURE. I'LL TELL HER. IF I FIND HER!

THE DETECTIVE WAS GONE. HARRY STOOD AT THE DOOR, SHIVERING...

HE KNOWS. I... I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING. HE'LL COME BACK WITH A WARRANT! THEY'LL SEARCH THE HOUSE... FIND THE FRESH-DUG GRAVE IN THE CELLAR. I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING...



HARRY WENT UP INTO THE ATTIC. HE PULLED THE TRUNK FROM BENEATH THE PILE OF DUSTY OLD RELICS...

YES, YES. IT'S THE ONLY WAY. I'VE GOT TO GET HER BODY OUT OF THE HOUSE... GOT TO GET RID OF IT. AND I THINK I KNOW HOW...



HARRY DRAGGED THE TRUNK DOWN INTO THE CELLAR. THEN HE WENT TO THE TOOL SHED, AND GOT THE SHOVEL AND THE HATCHET AND BROUGHT THEM TO THE CELLAR. HE BEGAN TO DIG...

AN UNIDENTIFIABLE BODY. IN A TRUNK. HOW COULD THEY TRACE IT TO ME...?



SARAH'S BATTERED AND BLOODY BODY WAS STIFF WITH RIGOR MORTIS WHEN HARRY LIFTED IT FROM ITS GRAVE. HE DUMPED IT INTO THE TRUNK...



HOW TO MAKE SURE IT WILL BE AN UNIDENTIFIABLE BODY.

HARRY PICKED UP THE HATCHET AND BEGAN TO HACK. THE BLADE ROSE AND FELL... ROSE AND FELL... UNTIL THE THING BEFORE HIM MELTED AWAY INTO A MASS OF RED BLOSS AND WHITE BONE... COUNTLESS SEVERED SECTIONS OF A ONCE WHOLE HUMAN BODY.



UGH... UGH... UGH... GADP! THERE! THAT OUGHT TO DO IT!

THE TRAIN PULLED OUT AND HARRY BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF. AFTER A WHILE HE WENT FORWARD TO THE BAGGAGE CAR...

JUST CHECKING, YOU HAVE A BROWN TRUNK... OH... THERE IT IS!

THIS ONE? 266-95! TO PEORIA?



HARRY CHECKED HIS TICKET...

NO! 266-81... TO CHICAGO! THAT OH... HERE IT IS... WHY THEY'RE ALMOST EXACTLY ALIKE!

THAT HAPPENS. DON'T WORRY I'LL BE CAREFUL, SIR!



HARRY WENT BACK TO THE CLUB CAR. HIS BLOOD FROZE AS HE ENTERED. THE DETECTIVE WAS SITTING THERE, DRINKING A LEMONADE...

CHOKES...



HARRY DUCKED BACK, FAST. HIS HEART BEGAN TO POUND LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER. THAT BLASTED DETECTIVE. HE WAS HOUNDING HARRY... FOLLOWING HIM TO CHICAGO. AND AT CHICAGO, THERE'D BE NO SARAH TO MEET HARRY... AND HE'D GET SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THE TRUNK...

THE TRUNK? OF COURSE! WHAT A BREAK!



HARRY MADE HIS WAY BACK TO THE BAGGAGE CAR...

THAT OTHER TRUNK! IF I COULD SWITCH TICKETS, MY TRUNK WILL BE TOSSED OFF AT PEORIA... WITH SARAH'S REMAINS IN IT...



THE BAGGAGE CAR WAS DIMLY LIT AS HARRY ENTERED. THE CLERK DOZED IN A CORNER. HARRY SLIPPED PAST HIM...

AND I'LL HAVE THE OTHER ONE. I'LL BE SAFE!



HARRY UNTIED THE TICKETS AND SWITCHED THEM. HE PATTED HIS TRUNK... THE ONE WITH THE GRISLY CARGO...

SO LONG, SARAH! SOMEBODY IN PEORIA IS GOING TO BE AWFULLY SHOCKED TO SEE WHAT'S LEFT OF YOU...



THEN HE LOCKED THE TRUNK AND DRAGGED IT OUT TO HIS CAR. AFTER REFILLING THE HOLE IN THE CELLAR AND CLEANING HIS TOOLS ONCE MORE, HE DROVE DOWN-TOWN TO THE RAILROAD STATION...

I'D LIKE TO BUY A TICKET TO CHICAGO, PLEASE, ON THE NEXT TRAIN PULL-MAN... LOWER BERTH...

THAT WILL BE \$42.50, SIR! HERE YOU ARE. YOU LEAVE IN TWENTY MINUTES...



AFTER PURCHASING HIS TICKET, HARRY DROVE THE CAR AROUND TO THE BAGGAGE RAMP...

I'D LIKE THIS TRUNK SENT ON TO CHICAGO! HERE'S MY TICKET.

YES, SIR! THAT WILL GO ON THE SAME TRAIN, SIR! IN THE BAGGAGE CAR...



IT WAS SO SIMPLE. NO NAME ON THE TRUNK. NOTHING BUT A NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE TICKET HARRY NEVER INTENDED TO USE. THAT IS, UNTIL...

GOING SOMEWHERE, MR. JAMESON?

HUH? OH! IT'S YOU...



HE'D FOLLOWED HARRY. HE SUSPECTED. HARRY SMILED...

YES! IT'S MY WIFE. SHE CALLED... FROM CHICAGO. ALL IS FORGIVEN. I'M GOING THERE. SEE? MY TICKET.

... AND THE TRUNK?



SARAH TOOK ALL OUR SUITCASES. IT'S THE ONLY THING I COULD PACK MY CLOTHES INTO. YOU SEE, WE'RE STAYING ON A WHILE... SORT OF A SECOND HONEYMOON.

THAT'S NICE, MR. JAMESON. I'M HAPPY FOR YOU FOR BOTH OF YOU. I'LL SEE YOU OFF...



HARRY'D HAVE TO GO NOW. THERE WAS NO WAY OUT. THE TRAIN WAS LEAVING IN TEN MINUTES. HARRY WENT THROUGH THE GATE ABSENTLY, TRYING TO THINK. WHAT COULD HE DO WITH THAT TRUNK? NOW COULD HE GET RID OF IT? THE DETECTIVE WAS AT HIS SIDE...

WELL, GOOD-BYE, OFFICER. THANK YOU... FOR EVERYTHING.

THERE'RE A FEW MINUTES LEFT, JAMESON! I'LL WALK YOU TO YOUR SEAT.



HARRY FOUND HIS CAR AND WENT INSIDE. THE DETECTIVE FOLLOWED. HE SMILED DOWN AT HARRY...

WELL, GIVE MY REGARDS TO MRS. JAMESON WHEN YOU SEE HER.

I WILL, OFFICER. AND THANKS AGAIN!



CHICAGO'S LA SALLE STREET STATION CAME UP AMID WHISTLE SCREAMS AND HISsing STEAM. HARRY PEERED OUT OF THE WINDOW. SOMEONE LEANED OVER HIS SHOULDER. THE DETECTIVE.

SEE HER, JAMESON? *N-NO!* SHE SHE PROBABLY DIDN'T GET MY MESSAGE...



YOU DON'T SEEM VERY SURPRISED TO SEE ME, JAMESON!



I'M NOT! I SAW YOU IN THE CLUB CAR LAST NIGHT! WELL, I'VE GOT TO BE GOING, OFFICER!



NOT SO FAST, JAMESON! I HAPPEN TO THINK YOUR WIFE ISN'T GOING TO SHOW UP HERE IN CHICAGO AT ALL. I HAPPEN TO THINK YOU MURDERED HER, AND HER BODY'S IN THAT TRUNK OF YOURS.

YOU HAPPEN TO BE WRONG, OFFICER. CARE TO TAKE A LOOK?



HARRY AND THE DETECTIVE MADE THEIR WAY TO THE BAGGAGE OFFICE, AND HARRY PRESENTED HIS TICKET...

GO AHEAD, OFFICER. OPEN 'ER UP!

NOT HERE, JAMESON. AT HEADQUARTERS. OH, PORTER...



THEY RODE ACROSS CHICAGO TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN SILENCE. HARRY CHUCKLED TO HIMSELF. HE'D BEEN PRETTY CLEVER. THE TRUNK WAS BROUGHT INTO A SMALL ROOM. THE DETECTIVE LIFTED THE LID...

GOOD LORD!

WELL? SATISFIED, OFFICER? NOW, CAN I... OH, MY GOD!



A MASS OF RED BLOSS AND WHITE BONE FILLED THE TRUNK... COUNTLESS SEVERED SECTIONS OF A ONCE HUMAN BODY. HARRY SCREAMED AS THE HANDCUFFS WERE SNAPPED ON HIS WRIST...

YOU SWITCHED THEM BACK! YOU SWITCHED THE TICKETS BACK! YOU KNEW I KILLED HER AND YOU SWITCHED THEM BACK...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, JAMESON, BUT THANKS FOR THE CONFESSION. G'MON, LET'S GO!



MEANWHILE, IN ONE OF THOSE FAST-DISAPPEARING EAST SIDE MANSIONS, HARRIET WALKER STOOD OVER HER INSANE SON, RUNNING HER HAND THROUGH HIS SHAGGY HAIR...

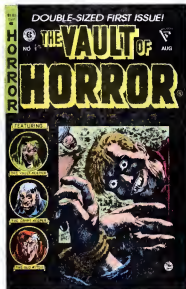
DID YOU... DID YOU GET RID OF WHAT WAS LEFT OF HER, MOTHER?

YES, ERIC. CLEVERLY, TOO! I PUT ANITA'S REMAINS IN AN OLD TRUNK, BOUGHT A TICKET TO PEGORIA, ILLINOIS, AND HAD IT SHIPPED ON AHEAD OF COURSE, I'LL NEVER USE THE TICKET...



THE END

COMING UP NEXT FROM GLADSTONE



WEIRD SCIENCE #1, featuring:

- "A New Beginning" by Al Williamson
- "The Headhunters" by George Evans
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- "Outcast of the Stars" by Joe Orlando
- "Am I Man or Machine?" by Al Feldstein
- "Only Time Will Tell" by Harry Harrison and Wally Wood
- "The Men of Tomorrow" by Jack Kamen
- "Trip into the Unknown" by Harvey Kurtzman

ON SALE JUNE, 1990



The Vault of Horror #1, featuring:

- "Star Light, Star Bright" by Johnny Craig
- "While the Cat's Away" by Jack Davis
- "Smoke Wrings" by Reed Crandall
- "Where There's a Will" by Graham Ingels
- "The Wall" by Johnny Craig
- "House of Horror" by Harvey Kurtzman
- "The Mad Magician" by Harry Harrison and Wally Wood
- "The Thing in the Swamp" by Al Feldstein

ON SALE MAY, 1990



(continued from inside front cover)

ourselves. That is why **Tales From the Crypt**, **The Vault of Horror**, and **The Haunt of Fear** are as apt today as they were forty years ago.

If we see a victim being stalked by an ax-murderer with the requisite cleaver in hand, our sensation will be terror; but let that murderer be a zombie, a vampire, a werewolf, or anything akin, and our response is horror. That's what E.C.'s are all about.

In make-believe horror there is always something hidden, something still and ever-



concealed, some forbidden knowledge, a kept secret. We don't quite know. But we would like to find out if we could do so safely. That's why Gladstone feels E.C. horror will strike the same responsive chord with readers today as it did in the 1950s. It's generally acknowledged that horror is not just an aspect of human experience, but a central part of it!

Had Newton really been right, and had there really been laws to govern all change, there could be no horror; only temporary ignorance, only terror. The sleep of reason, contended Goya in 1798, produces monsters and monsters have always been the prime carriers of horror. They are always "out there," rising from the ooze of the subconscious, like sea-beasts on the horizons of ancient maps and they are never totally nonhuman. The ancient monsters—the centaur, the sphinx, the minotaur—are partly brute and partly human, and the brute part is not in itself frightening. So too the modern monsters—the vampire, the Frankenstein monster, and the werewolf—are images of horror not because they do dreadful things to us (although they may well), but because they block our attempts to classify, categorize, and hence control them.

H. G. Wells generated intense horror in **The Island of Dr. Moreau** (1896) simply by dispassionately describing the harmless mutants created by the "mad scientist" who infused human forms and attributes into the animal world; Victor Hugo

achieved the same effect by "crossing" Quasimodo with the gargoyle.

It would be nice to think that a proper education could rid one of a hunger for horror, but theologians like John Wesley have always known better. Horror images have always been more than fear-jerkers; they are invariably the most subtle projections of buried and repressed fear. When it comes right down to it, the fascinating question is not why monsters were so suddenly obvious in the late eighteenth century, but how they could have been suppressed with such success for so long!

The invocation of horror has always been present in the English tradition from **Beowulf** on. In modern versions we forget the victims and even the hero, but we remember the monster! Everyone who read the original E.C.'s remembers a favorite today. . . and it is usually the monster or the deed that stands out. Thinking back to your own high school or college literature class, do you remember who, for instance, kills Dracula? How is the Frankenstein monster destroyed? Are we sure the werewolf is dead? Monsters have become bogeymen, and as the child in **Halloween** says, "Ya can't ever kill the bogeyman."

We read for enjoyment, including horror. But we



keep coming back because of memories. A cult of E.C. collectors began in the '50s and has survived to this day, though most think of themselves just as "fans." Some of the same ones who made contact with each other through the Letters to the GhouLunatics pages in those days still are in touch with each other today.

(We would like to thank Jim Twitchell, who is currently Alumni Professor of English at the University of Florida, for his permission to excerpt portions from his book, **Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror**, published by Oxford University Press. We apologize for any points that may have been lost by our abbreviations of his words or any changes of meaning that may have resulted from our blending of his thoughts with an occasional brief insertion of our own.

—The Publishers)

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TERROR



TALES



NO. 34
FEB.-MAR.

REPRINT
EDITION

FROM THE CRYPT

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER

IN THIS ISSUE:

E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY

RAY BRADBURY

AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! BACK AGAIN, I SEE! BACK FOR MORE CHILLS IN TALES FROM THE CRYPT? WELCOME, THEN! WELCOME TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! IT'S YOUR MOST IN HORROR, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, PLAIN TO GURGLE YOUR BLOOD WITH ANOTHER GREEK'S COLLECTORS ITEM! SO COME IN! IN THIS YARN, YOU WILL BE THE MAIN CHARACTER! OH, YOU'D LIKE THAT? WELL, WE'LL SEE! EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS WILL BE SEEN THROUGH YOUR... THE MAIN CHARACTER'S... EYES! READY? THEN START LIVING THE TALE I CALL...

MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE WALL!



YOU OPEN YOUR EYES, AND THE GLARING LIGHT OVERHEAD BLINDS YOU! SUDDENLY YOU REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN UNDER A SWIRLING SEA OF DARKNESS AND HAVE ONLY NOW COME TO THE SURFACE! A GREY HAZE HANGS OVER YOU... BUT SOON... EVEN THAT GLAZES AWAY LIKE CORNERS BRING TOWET ASIDE BY A PASTOROSULLY WILDED CUSTYR! THINGS COME INTO FOCUS! ZILLED OBJECTS SLOWLY FREEZE INTO SOLIDITY! A FIGURE BENDS OVER YOU, SHIELDING THE OVERHEAD GLARE FROM YOUR LIGHT-SENSITIVE EYES!



YOU BOD YOUR HEAD, LOOKING UP AT THE FIGURE BEADING OVER YOU! HIS READY LITTLE EYES GANCED BEHIND THICK CRYSTAL-LIKE GLASSES! HE SAID...

"I KNOW IT! I KNOW I COULD DO IT! OH, WE WILL BE ASHAMED, YOU AND I! THE WORLD WILL FLOOR TO SEE US!"



YOU LOOK AROUND! YOU ARE IN A SMALL INSTRUMENT-CLOUTERED ROOM! GLASS CABINETS FILLED WITH TEST-TUBES LINE THE WALLS! STRANGE SHAPED MACHINES SURROUND YOU! THE FIGURE STANDING OVER YOU PATS YOUR CHEST REASSURINGLY.

"DON'T TRY TO MOVE! JUST LIE THERE! CAN YOU TALK? CAN YOU SAY ANYTHING?"



YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH! SOMEWHERE BACK UNDER THAT SEA OF DARKNESS YOU HAVE JUST RISEN FROM! IS THE MEMORY OF SPEECH! YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH, BUT ONLY A CHOKING GURGLE SPILLS OUT...

"THAT'S ALL RIGHT! DO NOT WORRY! YOU WILL TALK AGAIN! I WILL TEACH YOU! NOW... REST..."



THE FIGURE WITH THE THICK GLASSES TURNS TO GO! HE MOVES THROUGH THE APPARATUS-CROWDED ROOM TO A DOOR AND OPENS IT! HE REACHES FOR A LIGHT SWITCH...

"I WILL BE BACK LATER! I MUST GO OUT FIRST NOW! IT IS TIME TO GIVE ANOTHER SHOW! REST! UNTIL LATER..."



THE ROOM FALLS INTO DARKNESS AND HE GOES OUT! FOR A WHILE YOU JUST LIE THERE, LUCKING IN THE WARM AIR! THEN YOU TRY TO SIT UP! SOMETHING TIGHT AROUND YOUR CHEST DIGS IN! YOU ARE STRAPPED DOWN...



YOU TRY TO MOVE YOUR ARM! THE METAL BANDS ACROSS YOUR WRISTS HOLD THEM FAST! YOU CALL OUT, SURPRISED AT THE HANGLED SOBERNESS OF YOUR OWN VOICE! YOU LOOK DOWN TOWARDS YOUR FEET... AT THE HEAVY SCUFFED SHOES AND THE BANDS ACROSS YOUR LEGS...



HOW DID YOU GET HERE? WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU? WHAT IS THIS FIRM TRYING TO DO TO YOU NOW? A COLD GRILL OF FEAR SHIVERS OVER YOU! YOU TUG AND STRAIN! THE STRAPS ACROSS YOUR CHEST PART LIKE PAPER AND YOU SIT UP, TEARING YOUR ARMS LOOSE... YOUR LEGS...



YOU CRANK THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW OF THE ROOM OUT INTO THE NIGHT! THE COOL NIGHT, FILLED WITH A THOUSAND VOICES... A MILLION FLOODING STARS! TO YOUR RIGHT, LIGHTS GLEAM BEHIND SILHOUETTED BUILDINGS...



PEOPLE... MANY PEOPLE... MOVE IN THE LIGHT... SAYING LAUGHING... TALKING! SOMEWHERE, A CALLOPE PLAYS... ITS MUSIC DRIFTING INTO THE DARKNESS! A HARSH VOICE CALLS... SURELY... PROMISING...



YOU ARE IN THE REAR ALLEYS OF AN AMUSEMENT PARK! THE LIGHT AND THE LAUGHTER AND THE MUSIC AND THE VOICES SEEM TO DRAW YOU... LIKE A MAGNET! YOU MOVE TOWARD THEM... SOME BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS... TOWARD THEM...



THEY'RE CLOSER NOW... THE LAUGHING PEOPLE! THEY MOVE PAST THE ALLEY... A SEA OF FACES... A SEA OF SMILES! AND NOW YOU'RE NEARLY THERE... NEARLY OUT OF THE ALLEY... NEARLY AMONG THEM...



THE WOMAN'S EYES BALGE IN HER BLANCHED FACE! SHE STARES AT YOU! HER HYSTERICAL SCREECH IS LIKE A DOOR SLAMMING OUT THE LAUGHTER... THE VOICES... THE MUSIC! SILENCE FALLS... FAVOR... BAD SILENCE!



SUDDENLY THE DOOR IS OPENED ONCE MORE! ONLY THIS TIME THERE IS NO LAUGHTER... NO MUSIC! SHOUTS OF DUBBY... SCREAMS OF TERROR POUR IN AT YOU...



AGAIN, THAT CHILL OF FEAR KNIFE THROUGH YOU! YOU TURN... TURN FROM THE SHOUTS AND THE SCREAMS AND THE BULGING EYES AND BLANCHED FACES... AND YOU RUN... BACK OF THE ALLEY... BASS INTO THE BLACKNESS...



FOOTSTEPS CLATTER AFTER YOU, BUT THEY SOON FADE? THE AMUSEMENT PARK IS VERY FAR AWAY WHEN YOU FINALLY SLOW DOWN TO A WALK? YOU SIGH FOR BREATH... AND YOUR HEART POUNDS IN YOUR CHEST LIKE A PISTON? YOU ARE ON A COUNTRY ROAD? THE RIBBON OF CONCRETE WINDS AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS? YOU MOVE ALONG IT...?



BEHIND YOU, A GENTLE PURRING GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER? A GLOW? YOU TURN... FACING INTO THE ONCOMING HEADLIGHT GLARE...?



THE CAR PULLS UP BESIDE YOU? THE DRIVER CALLS TO YOU...



WANT A RIDE INTO TOWN, BUD?

YOU OPEN THE DOOR? FOR A MOMENT HE LOOKS AT YOU, HORRIFIED? THEN HE SCREAMS...



WHY DO THEY SCREAM WHEN THEY SEE YOU? THAT FRIGHTENED, TERRIFYING SCREAMING? YOU WANT TO STOP IT! YOU CLAP YOUR HAND OVER HIS MOUTH? BUT HIS EYES STILL SCREAM...



AND THEN HIS EYES GLAZE... AND ROLL... AND HE IS DEAD? HIS BODY GOES LIMP AND YOU LET IT SLIP AWAY FROM YOU LIKE A SOFT BAG? HE FALLS AGAINST THE STEERING WHEEL AND THE HORN BEGINS TO BLOW... A LONG MONOTONOUS MOAN...



YOU PULL HIM FROM THE CAR AND PUSH HIM TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD...



THE CAR PULSES ALONG THE CONCRETE RIBBON SMOOTHLY! THE ROAD SLIPS FROM THE DARKNESS AHEAD INTO YOUR HEADLIGHT BEAM AND DOWN UNDER THE RUMBLING WHEELS! SOON HOUSES BEGIN TO APPEAR! YOU ARE GOING INTO TOWN! AND THINGS SEEM FAMILIAR TO YOU...



AND THEN YOU SEE IT! THE SMALL WHITE COTTAGE! YOUR FOOT DEPRESSSES THE BRAKE PEDAL AUTOMATICALLY AS YOU SWIRL INTO THE DRIVEWAY! YOU'VE DONE IT A THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE! YOU KNOW IT...



YOU SLIP FROM THE CAR AND CROSS THE FRESHLY CUT LAWN! THE NAME ON THE SIGN STICKS FORWARD IN THE THICK BED STRIKES A FAMILIAR NOTE! THE NAME! 'STONE!' SUDDENLY YOU REMEMBER! ARTHUR STONE! THAT'S WHO YOU ARE! AND NANCY, YOUR WIFE... SHE'S WAITING FOR YOU...



YOU HAMMER ANXIOUSLY ON THE HEAT CLEAR FRONT DOOR! UPSTAIRS, A LIGHT GOES ON! FOOTSTEPS DESCEND INSIDE... COMING CLOSER... COMING DOWN THE STEPS! THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN...



NANCY! EVEN NANCY LOOKS AT YOU LIKE THAT! THOSE EYES... THOSE WIDE, FRIGHTENED, TERRIFIED EYES! AND NOW SHE'S SCREAMING... SCREAMING LIKE THE OTHERS...



AND NOW SHE'S RUNNING UP THE STAIRS, SCREAMING! AND YOU'RE RUNNING AFTER HER... CALLING HER NAME! ONLY IT ISN'T HER NAME THAT ESCAPES FROM YOUR THROAT! IT'S A CHOKING, GABGLED, GUTTERAL SNAAL...



AND NOW SHE'S IN THE BEDROOM... AND YOU'RE MOVING TOWARD HER... PLEADING! BUT THERE'S NO RECOGNITION IN HER EYES... ONLY WILD MYSTERY! AND SHE'S BACKING AWAY, BACKING TOWARD THE OPEN WINDOW... TOWARD...



SUDDENLY SHE'S GONE... BACKWARDS... OUT THE WINDOW! AND HER SCREAM IS CUT SHORT BY THE GULL THUD AS HER FLAILING BODY HITS THE BACKYARD PATIO BELOW! YOU RUSH TO THE WINDOW... LOOKING DOWN AT HER... SOBBERING...



WHEN YOU GET TO HER, SHE'S DEAD? HER LIFE-LESS EYES STILL STARE AT YOU IN BLAZING FEAR...



YOU STUMBLE TO THE CAR AND SPEED BACK TO THE CARNIVAL! THE MAN WITH THE BEADY EYES AND THE THICK GLASSES? HE'S DONE SOMETHING TO YOU? NANCY IS DEAD... AND IT'S HIS FAULT...



AND THEN YOU'RE SLIPPING BACK UP THE AMUSEMENT PARK ALLEY, INTO THE OPEN WINDOW...



YOU? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? THE PLACE IS SWARMING WITH COOPER! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE ESCAPED!

YOU'RE MINE? I MADE YOU! I KNEW I COULD DO IT... AND I DID! I TOOK PARTS OF MONSTERS AND I PUT THEM TOGETHER! AND I TOOK A BRAIN... A BRAIN OF A MAN WHO DIED OUT THERE... IN MY GREAT MUSEUM... A MAN NAMED ARTHUR STONE? HE DIED OF A HEART ATTACK... AND I TOOK HIS BRAIN...



I MADE YOU LIVE? I ALWAYS BELIEVED IT WAS POSSIBLE! OUT THERE... IN MY CHAMBER OF HORRORS... THERE'S A TABLE FULL OF FRANKENSTEIN... AND HIS MONSTER! YOU'RE MY MONSTER... MY FRANKENSTEIN! WHAT AN EXPERIMENT YOU'LL MAKE! I'LL BE FAMOUS! I'LL... I'LL... DON'T... LOOK AT ME... LIKE THAT! NO! EEEEE...



YOUR FINGERS CLOSE ABOUT HIS THROAT, CUTTING OFF HIS SCREAM? AND EVEN AS THE LIFE FLEES FROM HIS TWITCHING BODY, YOU'RE STUFFING YOUR NEATLY STITCHED FINGERS... THE SCARF WHISTS... THE SCARRED ARMS...



...HRRRNNNN!

AND THEN YOU STUMBLE FROM THE ROOM... INTO THE WAX MUSEUM... LEAVING HIS LIFELESS BODY SPRAWLED AMID THE EQUIPMENT...



THEN YOU'RE STARING AT THE TABLEAU... BLOOD-CURLING GROUPINGS OF HISTORIC HORROR SCENES...



...AND SLOWLY YOU SEE IT! THE MOST REVOLTING SCENE OF ALL! A DISMEMBERED MONSTER... A CON-FLAGRATION OF STITCHED FLESH... A LEERING REPULSIVE THING... STARING AT YOU...



THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER... NO COUNT! YOU SLAP YOUR HANDS TO YOUR GULFERING MOUTH AS THE NAUSEA SWEEPS OVER YOU...



BUT THE MONSTER... THE MONSTER MOVES TOO!



A MIRROR! YOU'RE LOOKING INTO A MIRROR! THAT'S YOU IN THERE! THAT REPULSIVE, STITCHED-FLESHED, HORRIBLE MONSTER BEFORE YOU IS YOUR OWN REFLECTION...



YOU SMASH THE MIRROR INTO A THOUSAND SLIMP-BRINED SHINING PIECES IN SHEER DISGUST AND HORROR...



THEN YOU'RE RUNNING... SCREAMING... OUT IN THE MIDWAY...



THE CLATTER OF FOOTSTEPS IS RIGHT BEHIND YOU, AS YOU SWING INTO A DOORWAY...



YOU'RE IN A MAZE... A MAZE OF SMOOTH-WALLED DARK PASSAGEWAYS... TRAPPED...



SUDDENLY, THE PASSAGEWAYS ARE FLOODED IN BRILLIANT LIGHT! FIGURES LEAP AT YOU FROM ALL SIDES... HORRIBLE, DISFIGURED, BITTER-FLESHED FIGURES...



...AND NO MATTER WHICH WAY YOU TURN, YOUR BATTERING REVOLTING REFLECTION GLARES AT YOU. SCOUTS AT YOU... SHRIEKS AT YOU IN UTTER REVELLION...



UNTIL... WHEN THEY FIND YOU... THE LIFE LEFT TO YOUR MORTUOUS BORN-DRAWN BODY HAS FACED... ESCAPED FROM EACH COUNTLESS LONG DEAD SECTION... SUBTRACTED FROM THE SUM-PRODUCT OF HORROR THAT ADDED UP TO YOU... DRIVEN FROM YOU BY THE MADNESS OF YOUR OWN IMAGE...



HEH, HEH! YEP, KIDDIES! AS THEY ALWAYS SAY... IF LOOKS COULD KILL... I'LL... IN THIS CASE... THEY DID! I HOPE YOU LIKED TAKING THE PART OF THE MONSTER IN THIS STORY! I ALSO HOPE... HEH, HEH... THAT IT DIDN'T AFFECT YOU! IF I WERE YOU, I'D JUST GO ON TO THE MUSEUM KEEPER'S TALE'S WOULD'N'T...



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELL, NOW THAT THE DRIFT-KEEPER HAS FINISHED DISHING OUT HIS OLD OIL, IT'S MY TURN TO ENTERTAIN YOU FRENDS! WELCOME ONCE MORE TO THE HALL OF HORROR! THIS IS YOUR VAULT-KEEPER, WITH ANOTHER SCORCH MARK FROM MY COLLECTION! AND THIS ONE IS ABOUT OIL...BLACK, BOOBY, MONEY OIL! I CALL THIS BLOOD-CURLING HAIR-RAISER

OIL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL!



THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE CAME TO A STOP AT A POINT ON THE HIGHWAY OVERLOOKING THE SPRAWLING MIDWESTERN TOWN! THE TWO MEN IN THE CAR LOOKED DOWN AT THE BOOBY'S AND SMILED

WELL, HELL, THERE SHE IS... WAITING FOR US... LIKE A BUTTIN' DUCK... WAITING TO BE FLOORED.

THERE'S THE PLACE... DOWN THERE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN... AND THERE'S THE CEMETERY...



THE DRIVER TURNED TO THE ONE WITH THE CIGARETTE BETWEEN HIS LIPS...

LOOK, PHIL! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO TALK WITH THAT **BUTT** DABBLING IN FROM YOUR **SPORTS**? IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.

RIGHT ON! I'M **SPORTY**, SAM! I FORGOT.



WELL, DON'T FORGET! AFTER ALL! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AN **HONEST BUSINESSMAN**! YOU LOOK LIKE A **JANITOR** WHEN YOU DO THAT!

GRAY! **GRAY!** DON'T GET EXCITED, SAM! I'LL BE **CAMP**, **PHIL!**



THE CAR CONTINUED ON DOWN THE HIGHWAY FINALLY, IT PULLED UP BEFORE THE ONE HOTEL IN TOWN.

ALL RIGHT! ON YOUR TOES! HERE WE GO! I'LL START GETTING THE **GRIPS** OUT! YOU CHECK IN!

RIGHT, SAM!



THE ONE NAMED SAM STARTED TO UNLOAD THE LUGGAGE FROM THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE WHILE THE OTHER ONE... PHIL... ENTERED THE HOTEL AND CROSSED THE LOBBY TO THE DESK...

WORD! STRANGER! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

I'D LIKE **TWO ROOMS**... ONE FOR MYSELF AND ONE FOR MY **FIELD MAN!**



FIELD MAN! WHAT'S **PHIL'S**?

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE **WHILE** MY NAME IS **PHILIP SAUNDERS!** **OH!** MY BUSINESS! I LOCATE **OIL DEPOSITS** FOR **THE OIL COMPANIES!** MY **FIELD MAN**, **MR. JIMMISON**, HANDLES THE **GENERAL SUPERVISION** OF **PROSPECTIVE SITES!** WE'RE **JUST PAVING THROUGH!**



OH, BUT **WHY** HERE? **THINK!** OF **LOOKIN' AROUND THESE PARTS!**

THANK YOU! **BY... NO!** WE'RE ON OUR WAY **MONTH!**

WHERE SHALL I PUT THE **LUGGAGE**, **MR. GARDNER!**



ROOMS ON AND OFF, UP THEM **STAIRS** AND **TURN RIGHT!**

YOU HEARD THE **GENTLEMAN**, **TURN RIGHT!**

YES, SIR!



THE MAN BEHIND THE DESK
SWITCHED AS SAM CARRIED THE
LUGGAGE UP THE STAIRS AND PHIL
FOLLOWED...



FIGHT THEM, JESS!
SITTA NEAR THAT?
THE DAPPER
LOOKIN' GUY'S
AN OIL MAN!

WE MUST BE
RICH! TAKE
A WANDER AT
THE CAF
PAUSED OUT-
SIDE!

UPSTAIRS... OUT OF
SAM WHISPERED ANGRILY TO PHIL...



... TALKING TO THAT
CLERK WITH THAT
CIGARETTE
DANGLING FROM
YOUR MOUTH?
WHAT ARE YOU
TRYING TO DO...
OVER THE
DEAL?

I... I
FORGOT.
SAM! I'M
SORRY.

LATER... AS NIGHT CAME ON... IN THE
HOTEL LOBBY...



ONE HUNDRED
THOUSAND DOLLARS,
MR. GARSON?

THAT'S WHAT
MAYBONE
OIL COMPANY
PAID? MY
COMMISSION
WAS TEN
PERCENT...



AND THAT'S ALL YOU DO IN
LOCATE OIL DEPOSITS,
AND WHEN THE BIG OIL
COMPANIES WANT COLLECT
YOUR COMMISSION FROM
THE OWNER OF THE
LAND?

RIGHT?
ENOUGH SEEMS
TO ME YOU'D
BE BETTER OFF
DRILLIN'
YOURSELF!



A LOT BETTER OFF! YOU'RE
RIGHT! BUT DRILLING
EQUIPMENT COSTS A
GREAT DEAL, MR. PHIL!
MORE THAN I'VE GOT! I'D
HAVE TO BORROW...

MR. GARSON?
MR. GARSON!

IT'S HIS
FIELD
MAN, MR.
SIMPSON!



MR. GARSON! I'VE GOT TO
SPEAK TO YOU...
PRIVATELY!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT,
SIMPSON! OUT WITH
IT! YOU'RE ALL SCARED!
WHAT'S UP...?



OIL, MR. GARSON!
I'M SURE OF IT!

OIL? WHERE?

BETTER
COME
UP-
STAIRS,
MR.
SIMPSON!

SAM FOLLOWED PHIL UP THE STAIRS, BEHIND THEM THE HOTEL LOBBY BUZZED WITH EXCITEMENT...



UPSTAIRS IN THE ROOM. THE TWO MEN SMILED. PHIL DREW THE SHADE ASIDE AND PEERED OUT...



FIVE MINUTES LATER, PHIL CAME DOWNSTAIRS. THE LOBBY OF THE HOTEL WAS ANNIHILATED WITH TOWN-FOLK...



MAYOR JORDON'S NAME BEEN ADVISED BY MY FIELD MAN THAT THERE IS OIL ON THE TOWN'S PROPERTY... UNDER THE CITY PARK!



HEY! THERE'S TOWN'S OIL UNDER THE PARK!
SHALL WE GO ON OWE? MAYOR JORDON!
LET'S GO, MR. SIMPSON!



THE CROWD STOOD AROUND THE BLACK SLICK THAT OILED FROM THE GROUND IN THE PARK...



WELL... I COULD HANDLE IT FOR YOU... BUT IT WOULD COST A GREAT DEAL! ABOUT SIXTY THOUSAND DOLLARS...
SIXTY THOUSAND DOLLARS...
SAY, MAYOR! WHY COULDN'T YOU LET US FOLD IN FOR UP THE MONEY FROM A CORPORATION AND ISSUE STOCK...



MAYOR JORDON TURNED TO THE SPEAKERS.

WHAT DO YOU SAY, FOLKS? DO WE TURN THE LAND OVER TO A PRIVATE COMPANY, OR RAISE THE MONEY AND DRILL FOR THE OIL OURSELVES...?

CONFIDENTIAL! FEAR! LET'S KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY!



LATER, IN THE HOTEL ROOM...

THEY FELL FOR IT, SAM? THEY'RE GOING TO FORM A CORPORATION AND ISSUE STOCK? I'VE BEEN PUT IN CHARGE OF THE DRILLING!

GOOD? NOW AS SOON AS THEY TURN THE MONEY OVER TO US, WE'LL PULL THE ROPE!



A CORPORATION WAS FORMED! STOCK WAS ISSUED! SUBSCRIPTIONS FROM THE TOWN'S LEADERS IN...

FINALLY...

WELL, MR. BARSON? THE STOCK ISSUE HAS BEEN SOLD... EVERY LAST SHARE! HERE'S A CHECK FOR SIXTY THOUSAND DOLLARS!

GOOD! NOW WE CAN START THE DRILLING!

THEN...

HERE'S THE CHECK, SAM! I JUST CASHED THE CHECK! WHY DON'T WE STOP FOR A MOMENT AT THE CEMETERY ROUTINE...

NO! I'LL WANT TO BUY THIS CRAL, ABEON? YOU'VE GOT TO BE KEPT IN THE CLEAR! THE CEMETERY ROUTINE STAYS!



AND JUST TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T FORGET TO COME AND GIVE ME UP, I'LL HAVE THE BOSS! NOW GIVE ME ONE OF THOSE PILLS, AND PHONE THE BOSS! YOU KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

HERE YOU ARE...

S'LONG! DON'T FORGET! GIVE ME UP WITHIN SIX HOURS AFTER THEY GIVE ME! WE'LL PICK UP THE BOSS ON THE WAY OUT OF TOWN! AND FOR CRAL! GIVE LOLO, WITH THAT CIGARETTE...

RIGHT! OH... I FORGOT! S'LONG, SAM!



MAYOR JORDON WALKED TO PHIL BARBON'S HOTEL ROOM IN ANSWER TO HIS FRANTIC PHONE CALL...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN THE OIL DEPOSIT'S A FRAUD?
IT'S TRUE! WHEN I FOUND MY FIELD MAN, JONES, AND THE DRILLING MONEY WERE YOU I CHECKED?



WE POURED OIL INTO THAT SANDY SPOT IN THE PAST! THERE'S NO OIL UNDER THERE! WE'VE BEEN TAKEN/COMMED!



WE'LL GET HIM! HE WON'T GET AWAY!

JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN, THEY FOUND THE FLAKEY CONVERTIBLE.



HE'S DEAD!

NEARLY A FRAUD, PROBABLY.

DID YOU FIND THE MONEY/LAR?

NO! NOT A DOLLAR!

PHIL BARBON WAS QUESTIONED CAREFULLY...

I... I TRUSTED HIM! HE'D BEEN WITH ME ALMOST A YEAR! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! FIRST, LYING ABOUT THE OIL... THEN STEALING THE MONEY... AND NOW THIS! DEAD! I'M SO SORRY FOR ALL THE POLICE THAT TRUSTED ME!

IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE DONE WITH THE MONEY, MR. BARBON?



DON'T BE MAD AT ME! I HATE IT WITH HIM!

NO! WE SEARCHED CAREFULLY HIS CLOSETED... THE CAR! HE PROBABLY HAD IT SOMEWHERE PLANNING TO COME BACK AND GET IT! NOW, IT'S LOST... FOR GOOD!



I'D LIKE TO CLAIM HIS BODY... YOU KNOW... SHE WINS A DECENT BURIAL!

OF COURSE, MR. BARBON! I'LL GIVE YOU A RELEASE!



AND SO, THAT AFTERNOON, SAN SIMPSON WAS BURIED! NATURALLY, PHIL HAD MADE SURE THAT SAN'S BODY WAS NOT [EMERGED]...



AND WHEN THE EFFECTS OF THE FILL GAVE HIM SOME MORE OFF, HE WOKED UP SIX FEET UNDER THE EARTH...



WHAT'S THAT? SOMETHING STUCK... DRIVING INTO THE COFFIN? BRASSY WATER? I SMELL FUNNY...

THE WARM THICK LIQUID CONTINUED TO SEEP INTO THE COFFIN AS THE HOURS DRASSED BY...



PHIL WILL BE HERE SOON! WE'LL SEE ME UP! THERE! THAT SMELL?

THE OODS FISHED HIGHER AND HIGHER IN THE COFFIN? IT ROSE ABOVE SAM'S EARS...



PHIL? FOR PETER'S SAKE? NOBODY... BEFORE I DROWN? WHAT IS THAT OODS?

SAM WAS PRESSING HIS FACE AGAINST THE SATIN LID OF THE COFFIN, SUCKING AT THE LAST TRACES OF AIR WITH THE DEBRIS SOUNDED FROM ABOVE...



IT'S PHIL! THANK THE LORD! HURRY, PHIL! YOU WILL BE GLAD TO SEE YOUR STUPID FACE WITH THAT DAMNING CIGARETTE... AND... AND... NOW I KNOW WHAT THAT STUFF SMELLS LIKE FOR LORD!

AND AS PHIL LIFTED THE LID OF THE COFFIN, SAM SCREAMED AT HIM, HIS BLACK SHINING FACE RIDING FROM THE SURFACE OF THE OODS-FILLED COFFIN...



IT'S OIL... PHIL!

HURT

THE CIGARETTE DANGLING FROM PHIL'S MOUTH DROPPED INTO THE THICK BLACK OIL AS HIS JAW FELL OPEN IN ASTONISHMENT! SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A BLINDING WHITE FLASH...



PHARROOOOW!

WEN, HEN? PHIL FORGOT AGAIN? ONLY THIS TIME, SAM BLEW UP? OF COURSE PHIL WENT TO PIGS OVER HIS BAD HABIT, TOO! BUT THE LITTLE TOWN GOT ITS OIL BOOM AFTER ALL! THE DIRT BRAND SAM HAD HIDDEN WAS NEVER FOUND!



THEY TORE THE FLASHY CONVERTIBLE TO BITS, LOOKING FOR IT? WARRA OUT A CAR ON THE INSTALLMENT PLAN... A BIT AT A TIME? WE, NOW? SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAN, THE VAULT OF HORROR!

LOVE STORY



I met Negro in my last year of medical school. She had come to the university that year to study medicine as an exchange student from Mecklenburg, Germany.

Dr. Justin McGill was presenting an exhibit in his field of hematology, pertaining to any of the diseases of the blood, and as I was quite interested in this study, I spent much of my free time assisting him in preparing slides of blood smears.

I had just come from the university hospital with a fresh specimen of blood taken from a patient who was a "bleeder", one in whom the constituents of fibrin do not exist in proper proportion or proper quantity, thus preventing a clot to form when bleeding takes place. Many afflicted with this blood deficiency have died to death from a simple scratch!

Dr. McGill was conducting his hemocytology class when I entered his laboratory. I took a microscope from a wall cabinet and set it up on a table at the back of the room. I placed a few drops of the "bleeder's" non-coagulated blood on a slide and proceeded to study it under high-power.

I raised my head slowly from the eyepiece when a soft voice said in careful, precise English, "May I look at your slide?" It was a girl with seven-black hair and inquisitive dark eyes. Her face was as pale as her neatly starched laboratory frock.

She looked into my microscope. In a few seconds she said, "Hemophilat Delayed clotting of the blood and consequent difficulty in checking hemorrhage?"

"Right!", I added, surprised at her rapid cell-detection. "It's a congenital condition inherited by males through the mother as a sex-linked character."

"I feel so sorry for the people who are afflicted with it! They can't live a normal life ... they have to be so careful! There are so many strange conditions of the blood which are passed on from generation to generation", she said feebly. I thought she was just another medical student going through the usual stages of test-back hypochondria.

I soon learned that Negro was Dr. McGill's best student. She seemed obsessed with a morbid curiosity about blood. Whenever I worked in the lab, or classified types in the plasma depository, she would come to talk to me.

One day she came into the blood bank, her face more blanched than usual. I told her that she was studying too hard and recommended more rest. I left her in charge of the bank while I went to the medical building to see a dying friend who was wasting away from an invisible disease. Incidentally, the poor fellow was a classmate and an acquaintance of Negro's!

When I came back to relieve Negro, there was a red healthy glow to her face!

A few days later, my month-old friend expired. An autopsy showed a definite pernicious anemia. Half of the blood-content of his body had dried up in the course of a few weeks. Only a month before, he had undergone a complete physical and was found well and robust! As an added shock, I found a shortage of some forty-two pints in the blood bank!!

That night, I took Negro to town to see a movie. We were returning about midnight when my car was stalled by a sudden rain-storm ... wet wires! Negro and I sat in the front seat, watching the rain pounding on the hood and windshield. Soon I began to doze off ... but I didn't sleep very long! I was jolted upright by long, deep, gurgling, heaving, inhaling sounds!

I turned towards Negro. Her lips were bloody and her mouth was stretched over the alabaster-white surface of her writhing right forearm! She was swallowing her own blood as fast as she could draw it into her spastically contracting cheeks. But she could never satiate her lustful thirst for as she grew stronger, she also grew weaker! As she gained blood, she also lost blood!

Now all was clear to me! Negro had inherited Vampirism as an old family trait. I had read of the ancient blood-suckers of Mecklenburg! When the rain stopped, I set my car ... and Negro ... ablaze. She would find sweet innocent rest at last!

But why hadn't she inflicted her blood-sucking upon me? Could it be that Negro, the reluctant vampire, was in love with me?!

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

I CALL THIS NAUSEATING NURSERY NOVELETTE...

ATTACKS OF HORROR!



ONCE UPON A TIME...LONG, LONG AGO... THERE WAS A TINY SEASIDE KINGDOM GOVERNED BY A FAT KING WHO WAS MAD ABOUT MONEY...

ONE THOUSAND... TWO THOUSAND...
THREE THOUSAND... FOUR THOUSAND...
FIVE...

*"KING MONEYMAD!
KING MONEYMAD!"*

CAN'T YOU SEE I'M COUNTING MY MONEY, ROYAL ADVISOR!
I TOLD YOU NEVER TO INTERRUPT ME WHEN I'M COUNTING MY MONEY!
NOW I'LL HAVE TO BEGIN ALL OVER AGAIN!
ONE THOUSAND... TWO...

BUT KING MONEYMAD!
I'VE GOT IT! I'VE GOT IT! / A WAY FOR YOU TO GET MORE MONEY!



THREE THOUSAND...
FOUR...FIVE? YOU'VE
THOUGHT OF A WAY
FOR ME TO GET
MORE MONEY, ROYAL
ADVISOR? HOW?

TAXES,
RING
MONEYBAG!

TAXES, ROYAL
ADVISOR? WHAT
ARE TAXES?

YOU CHARGE
PEOPLE A
CERTAIN AMOUNT
OF MONEY FOR
SOMETHING THAT'S
CALLED A TAX?

WILL THAT
DO YOU TAX
PEOPLE
FOR
ROYAL
ADVISORY?

ANYTHING? YOU
JUST TAKE OF A
THING AND TAX
THEM FOR IT!



THAT'S ALL THERE IS FOR IT, EH,
ROYAL ADVISOR? JUST TAKE
OF SOMETHING AND TAX THEM
FOR IT, IS THAT RIGHT? ISSUE
A DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR...

A TAX DECREE,
EH, RING
MONEYBAG?

A TAX DECREE? YES! TO
ALL THE TITLED PEOPLE
IN MY KINGDOM...DUKES,
DARCS, LORDS, EARLS...
FOR USING THEIR TITLES, I
TAX THEM 10,000 PIECES
OF GOLD A YEAR!

SORT OF A 'DAR
TAX', EH, KING
MONEYBAG? GOOD!
I WILL ISSUE THE
DECREE IMMEDIATELY!



AND SO, FAT RING MONEYBAG LEARNED ABOUT TAXES!
HIS 'DAR TAX' WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS! MONEY
POURED INTO THE ROYAL TREASURY FROM AMONG
TITLE-HOLDERS ALL OVER THE KINGDOM...

ROYAL ADVISOR! HOW
MANY TIMES HAVE I
TOLD YOU NOT TO
INTERRUPT ME WHEN
I'M COUNTING MY
MONEY? NOW WHERE
WAS I?

KING MONEYBAG! ALL
TITLEHOLDERS HAVE
PAID THEIR 'DAR TAX'
THESE MONIES BE ANY
MORE MONEY COMING
INTO YOURS OF SOMETHING...

SEVEN THOUSAND... EIGHT
THOUSAND... NINE THOUSAND...
TEN...

KING MONEYBAG?
RING MONEYBAG?



TAKE A DECREE...ROYAL ADVISOR! TO ALL OWNERS OF HOUSES! A TAX OF THREE PIECES OF GOLD PER SQUARE YARD OF CARPETS IS HEREBY LEVIED!



'SAILS TAX,' OH, KING? GOOD! I'LL ISSUE THE DECREE, IMMEDIATELY!

AND SO THE 'SALES TAX' WAS LEVIED! MATE FISHERMAN PROTESTED...BUT TO NO AVAL!



BUT I HAVE SIXTY SQUARE YARDS OF SALES! MY FAMILY WILL STARVE!

100 PIECES OF GOLD... OF ELDER...

...AND MONEY Poured INTO THE ROYAL TREASURY...

TWELVE THOUSAND... THIRTEEN THOUSAND... FOURTEEN...



KING MONEYBAG! KING MONEYBAG!

ROYAL ADVISOR! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU... OH... WHAT'S THE USE? WHAT IS IT NOW?



IT'S THE 'SALES TAX,' KING MONEYBAG! ALL SALES HAVE BEEN TAXED! NO MORE MONEY WILL BE COMING IN! NOW WHAT?

ARE THOSE EXCESSIVE STILL WANDERING AROUND THE KINGDOM, ROYAL ADVISOR? THE ONES THAT FELL FORTUNES...



YES, KING MONEYBAG!

TAKE A DECREE...ROYAL ADVISOR! BECAUSE THERE ARE TOO MANY FORTUNE TELLERS IN THE KINGDOM, EACH ONE IS TAXED 100 PIECES OF GOLD...



'EXCESS PROPHETS TAX,' EX, KING? GOOD! I'LL ISSUE THE DECREE...

AND SO THE 'EXCESS PROPHETS TAX' WAS LEVIED! ANGRY GYPSY FORTUNE TELLERS PROTESTED...BUT TO NO AVAL!



BUT I WAS JUST ON MY WAY OUT OF THE KINGDOM!

100 PIECES OF GOLD, OR YOU'LL BE STAYING HERE A LONG, LONG TIME... IN A DUNGEON!

KING MONEYMAD'S MADNESS FOR MONEY GREW AND GREW AS MORE AND MORE POURED INTO HIS TREASURY! THE MORE HE GOT, THE MORE HE WANTED...

TAKE A DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR! ANYONE WHO OWNS A FISHING BOAT IS TAXED 50 PIECES OF GOLD.

'POLE TAX'!
EH, MINE...

NOW, KING MONEYMAD'S KINGDOM WAS A FISHING KINGDOM! SINCE IT WAS LOCATED BY THE SEA, MANY PEOPLE HAD FISHING BOATS! SO, WHEN THE 'POLE TAX' WAS LEVIED...

KING MONEYMAD HAS SOME FAR ENOUGH!

NINETY PIECES OF GOLD FOR A FISHING POLE.

HE'S TAKING US INTO POVERTY...



BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM WHO OWNED FISHING BOATS PAID THEIR 'POLE TAX' ANGER...

THIRTY - FIVE THOUSAND...
THIRTY - SIX THOUSAND...
THIRTY - SEVEN...

KING MONEYMAD!
KING MONEYMAD!



NOW WHAT?

THE POLE TAX HAS BEEN COMPLETELY COLLECTED! BUT ANY IDEAS?

TAKE A DECREE! TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE FISHES IN THEIR HOMES...

'CARPET TAX'!
EH?



THE PEOPLE OF KING MONEYMAD'S KINGDOM WERE FERIOUS...

50 PIECES OF GOLD BECAUSE I HAVE THAT STRIP MAT ON MY FLOOR...

A CARPET IS A CARPET! PAY UP OR ELSE...



PRACTICALLY EVERYONE HAD AT LEAST A MAT ON THEIR FLOOR! THOSE WHO COULDN'T PAY WERE DRAGGED OFF TO PRISON...

DADDY!
DADDY!

NO! NO! DON'T TAKE MY HUSBAND AWAY!

YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY THE 'CARPET TAX'! WHEN IT'S PAID, HE'LL BE RELEASED!



THE MONEY CONTINUED TO POUR INTO KING MONEYMAD'S TREASURY.

SIXTY-EIGHT THOUSAND... SIXTY-NINE...

"KING MONEYMAD!"

ALL RIGHT, ROYAL ADVISOR! WHAT'S THE BAD NEWS?

THE 'CARPET TAX'! IT'S ALL PAID UP!

THEN TAKE THIS DECREE, ROYAL ADVISOR! A TAX OF 20 PIECES OF GOLD EACH IS BEING LEVIED ON EVERY THING IN THE LAND...

'THUMB TAX'!

THIS TAX... THE 'THUMB TAX'... WAS THE LAST STRAW! THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN TAXED UNTIL THEY COULD PAY NO MORE...

THEY HAVE NO MORE MONEY! KING MONEYMAD! THEY CANNOT PAY THE 'THUMB TAX'!

IF THEY CAN'T PAY THE 'THUMB TAX'... THEN THEY CAN'T HAVE THEIR THUMBS! TAKE A DECREE!

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

IT SAYS THAT THE 'THUMB TAX' MUST BE PAID, OR THE THUMBS WILL BE REMOVED!

GASP!

THOSE WHO COULD NOT PAY WERE LINED UP OUTSIDE THE PALACE! THE LINE WAS VERY LONG! KING MONEYMAD SAT IN THE PALACE COURTYARD NEXT TO THE ARCHWAY...

ALL RIGHT! BRING THEM IN... ONE AT A TIME...

THE KING SAYS BRING THEM IN... ONE AT A TIME...

THE FIRST MAN WAS ORDERED TO THE CHOPPING BLOCK...

FOR NOT PAYING YOUR 'THUMB TAX', YOU MUST LOSE YOUR THUMBS...

NO! MERCY! MERCY!

THE AXEMEN ARE FELL! THE MAN SCREAMED...



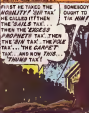
OUTSIDE THE CASTLE, THE PEOPLE ON LINE STARED AT EACH OTHER IN DISBELIEF...



HE'S REALLY GOING FORWARDLY WITH IT!

HE'S MAD!

THE LINE BEGAN TO MOVE! THE AXEMEN'S AXES ROSE AND FELL AGAIN AND AGAIN...



FIRST HE TAKED THE **ACQUITT?** **SUP TAX!** HE CALLED IT THEN THE **TRADE'S TAX!** ... THEN THE **EXCESS PROPHETS' TAX!** THEN THE **'BORN' TAX!** ... THE **ROSE TAX!** ... THE **'CARPET' TAX!** ... AND NOW **FEED...** **'THANK TAX!**

SOMEBODY DUGHT TO **TAX HIM!**

THE LINE CONTINUED TO MOVE! THE AXEMEN'S AXES ROSE AND FELL! SCREAMS ECHOED IN THE COURTYARD! OUTSIDE... THE LINE BEGAN TO SHAKLE... THEN SHOUT! SUDDENLY...



LET'S GET HIM!

WE'VE BEEN TARED ENOUGH!

LET'S TAKE HIM!

THE CROWD STORMED INTO THE COURTYARD, SEIZING THE KING! SOMEBODY GRABBED THE AXEMEN'S AXES...



STOP THIS! STOP THIS! I AM YOUR KING!

AND YOUR PEOPLE HAVE DECIDED TO TAX YOU, YOUR MAJESTY...

THE CROWD MOVED IN! THE AXE WAS RAISED! THE KING SCREAMED! THE CROWD CHIEFED! THE AXE FELL! SOMEBODY BENT AND PICKED IT UP FOR ALL TO SEE... A MAN-LIKE, YELLOWISH, BLOOD-STAINED FORM...



...CORPORATION TAX!

HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S MY **GRIM FAIRY TALE** FOR THIS ISSUE. REQUEST THE PEOPLE SUFFERED **KING MONEYMAD'S TAXATION** UNTIL THEY COULDN'T STOMACH IT ANY LONGER... AND THEN THEY TOOK **KING MONEYMAD'S... STOMACH** THAT IS! **GRIM?** THAT'S THE **IDEA!** HEH, HEH! NOW... IF YOU'LL SMILE YOUR EYES RIGHT... TO THE




OLD WYTON... SHE'LL WIND UP MY MAN WITH A SERVING FROM HER CAULDRON? GET THE **BEANS** READY! SHE NOW!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HELLO! YEP, KIDNOS, IT'S YOUR HOSTESS IN *THE MOUNT OF FEAR*, THE OLD WITCH, STIRRING HER CAULDRON AGAIN, READY TO SERVE UP ANOTHER HORROR HELPING. THE RECIPE I'VE COOKED UP THIS TIME WAS FIRST DISHED OUT BY A VERY DEAR FRIEND OF MINE, AMERICA'S FOREMOST FANTASY WRITER, **RAY BRADBURY**! SO, TUCK YOUR SCHOOL BOOKS UNDER YOUR CHAIRS, AND I'LL FEED YOU MY ADAPTATION OF MR. BRADBURY'S...

**THERE WAS AN
OLD WOMAN!**



THE TALL DARK YOUNG MAN STOOD QUIETLY, NOT MOVING. AGENT TILDY SHOOK HER HEAD, FURRING WITH HER EYEBROWS...

NO? THERE'S NO USE ARGUING. I GOT MY MIND FIXED. YOU RUN ALONG WITH YOUR SILLY BUCKED BASKET, LANDLARD. WHEN'D YOU EVER GET NOTIONS LIKE THAT? YOU JUST GET OUT OF HERE AND DON'T BOTHER ME.

THE TALL DARK MAN SAT DOWN, HE JUST SAT THERE, STARRING. THE BONG-PONG-PLAIN, FLOWERED CLOCK ON THE MARTEL-CORMED THREE, OUT IN THE HALL, BOUNDED AROUND THE WOODEN BASKET. FOUR MEN WAITED, SILENTLY, HAPPLY MOVING, AS IF THEY WERE THERE.

HOW ABOUT THAT WICKER BASKET. IT'S NOT SIX FEET LONG AND BY THE LOOK OF IT IT AIN'T LAUNDRY. AND THOSE FOUR MEN YOU WALKED IN WITH, YOU DON'T NEED THEM TO CARRY THE BASKET. WHY, IT'S LIGHT AS THIRTEEN PUP!

THE DARK YOUNG MAN WATCHED ALM TILTY SOMETHING IN HIS FACE SUGGESTED THAT THE BASKET WOULDN'T BE SO LIGHT AFTER A WHILE. THERE'D BE SOMETHING IN IT.

NOW WHERE'VE I SEEN A WICKER LIKE THAT BEFORE? BEEMS TO ME... OH! NOW I REMEMBER! IT WAS WHEN MR. DRYER PASSED AWAY NEXT DOOR.



AIN'T TILTY BETHER KNITTING DOWN STERNLY.

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE HERE FOR, I KNOW! YOU WERE WONKIN' TO SELL ME SOMETHING. WELL YOU JUST BET TELL EARLY COMES HOME, SHE'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU. SHE'LL SHOO YOU OUT OF THE MARLO SO SWACK IT'LL...

THE DARK MAN LOOKED AT ALM TILTY AS IF SHE WERE TIED.

NOT I'M NOT I'M NOT TIED. GREAT BONS O' SOBBER ON THE SILBERNY FIRE. I GOT A HUNDRED COMFORTERS, TWO HUNDRED SWEATERS, AND SIX HUNDRED POF-HOLDERS IN THESE FINGERS. NO MATTER POF BRINTT THEY ARE, YOU RUN AND COME BACK WHEN THEY'RE DONE... AND MATEE I'LL TALK TO YOU.

THERE WAS A NOISE. THE MARTEL CLOCK BOUNDED THREE. STRANGELY IT SEEMED TO HER THAT IT HAD CHIMED THREE ONCE, BEFORE.

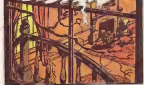
ARE YOU JUST GOIN' TO SIT THERE, YOUNG MAN?



HE WAS...

THEN, YOU DON'T BIDE IF I TAKE A NAP. JUST A CAT-NAP. NOW YOU DON'T GET UP OFF THAT CHAIN. YOU BET THERE. YOU BET THERE AND DON'T COME CREEP'N' AROUND ME. JUST GOIN' TO CLOSE MY EYES FOR A WEB SPELL...

NO FEARNIN'. NO DROWIN'. NO DEEP, UNDER WATER. ALMOST. OH, SO NICE. WHO'S THAT MOVIN' AROUND IN THE DARK WITH MY EYES CLOSED? WHO'S THAT KISSIN' MY CHEEK? POF, CHILTY NO. GUESS IT WAS BT THOUGHTS. ONLY DREAMIN', DRIFTIN', GIFTIN' OFF... OH.



THE CLOCK CHIRPED THREE TIMES. AUNT TILLY SAT UP. THE YOUNG MAN IN THE DARK SUIT STOOD NEAR THE DOOR. "YOU LEAVIN' SO SOON, YOUNG MARY? GOOD THING! EMILY'S COMIN' HOME AND SHE'D ITS YOU. HAD TO BRING UP, DIDN'T YOU? COULDN'T DOWNTOWN ME, COULD YOU? WELL, YOUNG MAN, YOU NEEDN'T BOTHER COMIN' BACK TO TRY AGAIN!"



THE DARK YOUNG MAN BOWED WITH SLIGHT OBEDIENCE. HE HAD NO INTENTION OF COMING BACK... EVER.

FINE. WHY YOU COULDN'T GET ME OUT OF THIS HOUSE. HOSKINS? WHY, I'M GOING TO KAIT IN THIS WINDOW THE NEXT THOUSAND YEARS. THEY'LL HAVE TO OPEN THE SHARDS AROUND ME TO... TO... GAWD LOOKIN' LIKE THE CAT THAT ATE THE BIRD! GET OUT AND TOTE THAT FOOL WICKER BOX WITH YOU!"



THE FOUR MEN TREADED HEAVILY OUT THE FRONT DOOR. TILLY STUDIED THE WAY THEY HANDED THE WICKER. IT WASN'T HEAVY, BUT THEY STAGGERED WITH ITS WEIGHT. SHE BLANCED ABOUT CONCERNEDLY...



"HERE, NOW? DID YOU STEAL SOME OF MY ANTIQUES? MY BOOKS? NO. THE CLOCK? NO. WHAT YOU GOT IN THAT WICKER?"

THE DARK MAN OFFERED THE KEY OF THE WICKER TO AUNT TILLY. IN FANTASY HE WONDERED IF SHE'D LIKE TO OPEN IT AND TAKE INSIDE...



"GAWDUS! MEE? SHAN, NO. GET OUT! GET OUT! HERE! HOSKINS!"

THE DOOR BLAMMED. THAT WAS BETTER DAMNED FOOL MEN WITH THEIR MADDOTY IDEAS...



"AN WERE COMES EMILY. ABOUT FIVE. BUT, LARD SHE LOOKS PALE AND FOMBY TODAY. WALKIN' SO SLOW..."

EMILY SHUFFLED INTO THE HALL, HEAD DOWN. EMILY'S EYES



"WAZIN' FOR YOU. THERE WAS THE DAMNDEST FOOL MEN JUST HERE WITH A WICKER. GLAD YOU'RE HOME! EMILY..."

"EMILY! STOP SCREAMING!"



A WHITE-SMOKED MAN, EVIDENTLY A MORTICIAN, GLANCED UP FROM THE RECENTLY ARRIVED WIGGERS AS AUNT TILLY STORMED INTO THE MORTUARY.

"MADAME! THIS IS NO FIT PLACE FOR A GENTLE-WOMAN!"

"WELL, GLAD YOU FEEL THAT WAY. THERE'S MY SENTIMENTS, EXACTLY. I DON'T WANT *ME* HERE! I WANT *ME HOME!*" I GOT EMILY TO FEED! SWATERS TO *KNIT!* GLOVES TO *WIND!*...

THE MORTICIAN LOOKED AT HER, THEN AT THE WICKER. HE HEATHED HIS WORDS WITH APPARENT RELIGION, AND A WHISPERING OF HIS KNIVES, TUBES, JARS AND INSTRUMENTS...

"MADAME! I HAVE WORK TO DO! A *BODY* HAS ARRIVED!"

"YOU LAY SO MUCH AS A *DISFIGURE* ON THAT *BODY* AND I'LL THROU- YOU!"



THE MORTICIAN OPENED THE WICKER LID CAREFULLY THEN, IN A VICARIOUS SERIES OF SCOUTING, HE REALIZED THAT THE *BODY* WERE WAS. IT SEEMED... *COULD* IT BE...

"OH... THIS *LADY*, HERE? SHE IS... A *RELATIVE?*"

"NO! NO! NO! FOO! *ME!*" DO YOU HEART *ME!*? I WANT MY *BODY* BACK!"



THE MORTICIAN CONSIDERED THE IDEA. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD.

"NOTHING LIKE THIS DON'T *SAFFERY* SECRET! SHOW HER *OUT!* GET HELP FROM THE *DINNERS!* I CAN'T WORK WITH A *CRANE* PRESENT!"



THE FOUR MEN ASSEMBLED AND CONVERSED. AUNT TILLY WAS A *LARGE* PORTRESS, ARMS CROSSED IN DEFIANCE.



SHE REPEATED THIS AS SHE WAS EVICTED IN CON- VOLUTIVE MOVES, LIKE A PAWN ON A CHESSBOARD, FROM THE LABORATORY. FINALLY, SHE SAT DOWN ON A CHAIR IN THE VESTIBULE OF THE FUNERAL PARLOR. THERE WERE FEWS GOING BACK INTO SILENCE AND A FLOWER SMELL...

"YOU CAN'T SIT *THERE*, MADAM! THAT'S WHERE THE *BODY* RESTS FOR THE *SERVICES* TONIGHT!"

"I'M *SITTING* HERE! TELL I GET WHAT I WANT!"



MR. GARRINGTON, MORTUARY PRESIDENT, HEARD THE DISTURBANCE AND CAME TROUBLE DOWN THE AISLE TO INVESTIGATE...

"HERE, HERE! MORE RESPECT FOR MADAME. MAY I HELP YOU?"

"OH IS THAT *BACK* ROOM THERE AND TELL THAT *EAGER* INVESTIGATOR TO *QUIT* FOOLING WITH MY *BODY!*"



MR. CARRINGTON HURRIED OFF AFTER FIFTEEN MINUTES OF COMPARING NOTES WITH THE MORTICIAN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. HE RETURNED, THREE SHADES WHITER



MR. THAT IS... MOST INTERESTING! MOST INTERESTING! YOU TELL THAT...

BUT HE'S ALREADY PUMPING THE BLOOD FROM THE BODY!



YES, YES SO YOU JUST GO AWAY NOW. THERE'S NOTHING TO BE DONE. THE BLOOD IS RUNNING AND SOON THE BODY'LL BE ALL FILLED WITH WIDE FRESH FORMALDEHYDE. AND BESIDES... HE'S ALSO PERFORMING A BREEZY AUTOPSY!



I'VE TO DETERMINE CAUSE OF DEATH. YEAH, HE



SEARCH STRAIGHT IN AND FEEL THAT CUTE-EM-UP TO PUMP ALL THAT FINE NEW ENGLAND BLOOD RIGHT BACK INTO THAT FINE-SKIN RED BODY! AND IF HE'S TAKEN ANYTHING OUT OF HIM TO ATTACH IT BACK IN SO IT'LL FUNCTION PROPER! YOU HEAR?



THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO. NOTHING!



ALL RIGHT! I'M GETTING HOME THE NEXT TWO HUNDRED YEARS! YOU HEAR? AND ANYTIME ANYONE COMES NEAR ME, I'LL SPIT SETOPLASM RIGHT DOWN UP THEIR LEFT NOSTRIL.



YOU, YOU WOULDN'T DO THAT? NO, YOU'LL DELICATE OUR BUSINESS! YOU WOULDN'T...



OH, WOULDN'T I?



ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! YOU CAN HAVE YOUR BODY BACK.



HA!



AUNT TILLY SCREAMED IN TRANCE, THEN... WITH CAUTION.

INTACT? NO FORMAL IDENTIFICATION?

INTACT? NO FORMAL IDENTIFICATION?

BLOOD BACK IN IT!

BLOOD, MY GOD, FEEL BLOOD! IF YOU'LL ONLY TAKE IT AND GO!

FAIR ENOUGH. FIX 'ER UP. IT'S A DEAL.

I'LL... TELL THE MORTICIAN.



AUNTIE TILLY DIDN'T LOOK AT THE BODY MUCH. HER ONLY COMMENT WAS...

NATURAL LOOKIN'. EASY! EASY! PUT THE WICKER BARREL DOWN 'T'HE FLOOR WHERE I CAN STEP IN IT.



THEN SHE LET HERSELF FALL BACK INTO THE WICKER. A BITING SENSATION OF ARTIS GOLDNESS, A GREAT UNLIKELY RASBER, AND A CROOD WHORLING, LIKE TWO DROPS OF WATER FUSING TOGETHER. WATER TRYING TO SEEP INTO CONCRETE...



THE MORTUARY PEOPLE WATCHED AUNT TILLY'S WIGGLES, TRYING TO ASSIST WITH SCOOTING AND GRUNTING NOVES OF THEIR ARMS AND HANDS, KEEPING INTO COLD GRANITE, SEEPING INTO A FROZEN STATE, SCORCHING ALL THE WAY.

THE BODY HALF ROLLS, BUSTLING IN THE DRY WICKER.

SEE! FEEL!

COME ALIVE, DEAR YE, RAISE UP A BIT.



LIGHT ENTERED THE HEBBLED BLIND EYES. THE BODY FELT THE ROOM WARMTH...



MOVE... WALK...

THE BODY TOOK A CREAKINGLY UNSTEADY STEP. THE BODY WALKED...



NOW... SPEAK! MUCH DELICED. THANK YOU NOW... GRY!

AND SHEY TILDE NOGAN TO GRY TEARS OF UTTER HAPPINESS...

AND NOW, ANY AFTERNOON ABOUT FOUR, IF YOU WANT TO VISIT AUNT TILDE, YOU JUST WALK AROUND AND KNOCK ON HER DOOR. THERE'S A BIG BLACK FUNERAL BREADTH ON IT... BUT DON'T WIND THAT. AUNT TILDE LEFT IT THERE. SHE HAS A SENSE OF HUMOR. JUST RAP ON THE DOOR AND SHE'LL SAY...



IS IT THE MAN IN BLACK?

NO. IT'S ONLY MS. AUNT TILDE!

SHE'LL UNLOCK THE DOUBLE-BARRED, TRIPLE-LOCKED DOOR AND SHE'LL LAUGH AND SAY...



COME IN... QUICKLY!

AND SHEY! WHEN THE DOOR OPENS AND CLAM IT SHUT BEHIND YOU SO NO MAN-IN-BLACK CAN EVER SLIP IN WITH YOU. THEN SHE'LL ESCORT YOU IN, AND MARGE POUR YOU SOME TEA... AND MARGE... IF YOU'RE SPECIALLY GOOD, SHE'LL GIVE YOU A 'DREAM'. SHE'LL UNFASTEN THE WHITE LACE AT HER NECK AND CHEST AND FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, SHOW WHAT LIES BENEATH... THE LONG BLACK AUTOMATED SCAR.

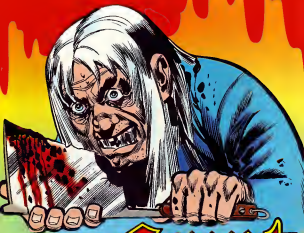


NOT BAD SCARY FOR A MAN!

HEL, HEL! YEP, FRIENDS. THAT'S AUNT TILDE'S STORY. THE WAY RAY BRADGORY TOLD IT. TIME, I HOPE YOU LARDED MY LITTLE SERVING OF SPOOKS FOR THIS ISSUE OF S.F.'S MAG.



I HOPE YOU LARDED MY LITTLE SERVING OF SPOOKS FOR THIS ISSUE OF S.F.'S MAG. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE KNOCK-OUTER'S THE HALL OF HORROR '87E. HOW?



The Crypt Keeper



ULTIMATE
HORROR



NO. 35
APR - MAY

TALES



REPRINT
EDITION

FROM THE

CRYPT



FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEY, HEY! WELCOME BACK, FIENDS! WELCOME ONCE AGAIN TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO NARRATE ANOTHER HAUNTING TALE FROM MY COLLECTION! SO COME IN! SIT DOWN ON THAT SACK OF SILVER DOLLARS THERE AND I'LL BEGIN! THIS STORY HAPPENED TO A YOUNG CHAP NAMED PETER. IT'S IN HIS VERY OWN WORDS! I'LL TELL IT TO YOU THE WAY HE TOLD IT TO ME! HE CALLS THIS SPINE-TINGLING, HAIR-STANDING, BLOOD-FREEZER...

BY THE FRIGHT OF THE SILVERY MOON!



MY NAME IS PETER SEDNA. I AM FIFTEEN YEARS OLD. MY FATHER, ALEC SEDNA, HAD BROUGHT ME AND MY BROTHER EDWARD TO THIS COUNTRY FROM HUNGARY SOON AFTER THE END OF THE LAST WAR WITH THE MEAGER AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT MY FATHER HAD MANAGED TO SAVE. HE'D BOUGHT A SMALL FARM IN THE MID-WEST. EVERYTHING SEEMED TO BE GOING ALONG FINE FOR US WHEN...

PAPA? PAPA? COME QUICKLY!

WHAT IS IT, EDWARD? HE IS A GHOST, PAPA!



IT'S HAPPENED ABOUT A YEAR AFTER WE ARRIVED IN AMERICA. EDWARD, MY TWENTY-SEVEN BROTHER, HAD BEEN OUT IN THE FIELDS. SUDDENLY, HE'D COME DRIBBLING ACROSS THE PASTURE, SCREAMING FOR MY FATHER.



THERE'S A DEAD MAN PAPA! IN THE CORN-FIELD! COME QUICKLY!

A DEAD MAN? WHERE? SHOW ME!

I'M COMING TOO!

I FOLLOWED MY FATHER AND EDWARD TO THE CORNFIELD. THE MAN WAS THERE, ALL RIGHT! ALL THAT WAS LEFT OF HIM? HE'D BEEN HORRIBLY MUTILATED... AS THOUGH



GOOD LORD! HE... HE'S AFFLICTED... BY A WILD BEAST!

BUT PAPA! THERE ARE NO WILD BEASTS AROUND HERE!

EDWARD IS RIGHT, PAPA!



THEN... THEN IT IS THE WORK OF A WERE-WOLF!

A WERE-WOLF?

PAPA!



MY FATHER LOOKED AT EDWARD AND ME, A BARENESS CLODDING HIS FACE...

I'D THOUGHT THAT WE HAD LEFT SUCH HORRORS AS WERE-WOLVES BEHIND US... IN AMERICA! I SEE THAT I AM WRONG!

ARE YOU SURE, PAPA? ARE YOU SURE IT IS A WERE-WOLF?



HE TURNED AND STARTED BACK TO THE HOUSE.

I AM SURE, PAPA! EDWARD IS CORRECT! WE MUST GO TO THE TOWN... TO TELL THEM WHAT WE HAVE FOUND!

YES, PAPA! YOU'RE RIGHT! GOING TO TELL THEM I MEAN...



NO, PETER! I AM NOT GOING TO TELL THEM THAT I THINK IT IS THE WORK OF A WERE-WOLF! THEY WOULD NOT BELIEVE IT... ANYWAY!

WEREWOLVES IN AMERICA! I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT MYSELF!



SO MY FATHER DROVE US INTO TOWN, MY BROTHER EDWARD AND MYSELF, AND BOON OUR LITTLE TOWN WAS ALIVE WITH THE CURIOUS WHO CAME OUT FROM ALL AROUND TO SEE THE SCENE THERE...

TURN TO SHREDDY! WERE-WOLF, CHUCK!

THE SHERIFF QUESTIONED MY FATHER FOR SOME TIME...

AND YOU HEARD NO... I HEARD
SOUNDS, MR. SHERIFF! NOTHING!
NO GUNS... LAST
NIGHT?



I CAN'T FIGURE WHAT
COULD HAVE DONE IT!
LOOKS LIKE A WILD
ANIMAL ATTACKED HIM,
YET WE AIN'T GOT
NOTHIN' LIKE THAT
'ROUND HERE! ANY
IDEAS, MR. SHERIFF?

I I
HAVE
NONE!



MELVINWILE, MY YOUNGER BROTHER
WAS MINGLING WITH THE LOCAL
FARM-BOYS...

MAYBE IT
WAS AN
ESCAPED
LEOP...FROM
A ZOOOOO!

AN, WE
WOULDFE
HEARD
ABOUT
IT ON
THE
RADIO!

MY FARA
SAID IT
WAS A
WEREWOLF!



A...A
WEREWOLFF?

WHAT'S
THAT?

A WEREWOLF IS A
HUMAN BEING WHO
CHANGES WHEN THE
FULL MOON COMES
UP, INTO A VICIOUS
FLESH-OR-BONE
WOLF!



AN' SOMY
BOO? STUFF?
WHO BELIEVES
IN THAT JUNK?

IN MY OLD COUNTRY,
IN HUNGARY, THE
PEOPLE THERE
BELIEVE IN
WEREWOLVES!

EDWARD?



TELL THEM, PETERTELL,
THEN THAT THERE REALLY
ARE SUCH THINGS AS
WEREWOLVES!

MY MY BROTHER
HAD A VIVID
IMAGINATION!
YOU... YOU SHOULD
BECAUSE HIM!
COME INSIDE,
EDWARD!

AN' I
DIDN'T
BELIEVE
HIM, ANY
WAY!



I PUSHED EDWARD INTO THE HOUSE...

WHY DON'T
YOU LEAVE
TO KEEP YOUR
BIG MOUTH
SHUT?

BUT WHAT HARM
IS THERE IN
TALKING ABOUT
WEREWOLVES?

WEREWOLVES?
SHP WHO
SAYS SOMETHIN'
'BOUT
WEREWOLVES?



IT WAS SHERIFF HUSSON! HE'D OVERHEARD US! HE STOOD THERE, BLARING DOWN AT US WITH BUSHY EYEBROWS ARCHED...

WELL... WHAT ABOUT WEREWOLVES?

IF NOTHING, SIR? HE DIDN'T SAY.

FATHER SAYS IT'S THE WORK OF A WEREWOLF. THAT KILLING!



FORWARD? OH, HE DIDN'T HE? IS ANYWAY WHERE WE CAME FROM. THERE ARE MANY WEREWOLVES! DURING THE DAY, THEY ARE JUST LIKE ORDINARY HUMAN BEINGS. BUT ON THE NIGHT THAT THE MOON IS FULL... THEY CHANGE...



THEY CHANGE INTO A WOLF. EAT AND THEY EAT HUMAN FLESH?

OH WHY, SHERIFF? YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT THEM, DON'T YOU?

YES? I DO? OHAY, BOYS! LET'S GO! WRAP THAT CRITTER IN A SACK AND LET'S CLEAN OUT OF HERE!

OHAY, SHERIFF!



AFTER THE SHERIFF AND HIS DEPUTIES AND THE TOWNSFOLK HAD LEFT OUR FATHER, I TOLD MY FATHER ABOUT EDWARD. AND HIS OWN MOUTH...

...AND HE TOLD ME THAT... EVEN THE SHERIFF?

WELL? I WOULDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH. HENRY? THEY WON'T BELIEVE THAT!



BUT FATHER WAS WRONG? SHERIFF HUSSON WENT BACK TO TOWN TO HIS OFFICE AND...

HAD HE THAT ALMANAC THERE, HENRY? SOMETHING I WANT TO LOOK UP?

SURE THING, SHERIFF! MORE Y'ARE?



SHERIFF HUSSON FLIPPED THROUGH THE PAGES OF THE ALMANAC, FOUND WHAT HE WANTED... AND STOOD IT FOR SOME TIME...

KNOW SOMETHING, HENRY? LAST NIGHT WAS THE NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON!

FULL... MOON? SO WHAT?



SHERIFF HUDSON MADE A TRIP TO THE TOWN LIBRARY AFTER THAT! HE WANTED TO READ UP ON...

WEREWOLVES? OH, DEAR! LET ME SEE IT, W...! NO... WEREWOLVES! AH... YES, WE HAVE A BOOK THAT COVERS THE SUBJECT...

LET ME SEE IT, EN, MISS FUNDLETT!



ABOUT A MONTH LATER, I WAS AWAKENED FROM A FITFUL SLEEP BY THE SOUND OF A DISTANT HOWLING. I GOT UP AND RAN TO MY FATHER'S BEDROOM. HE WAS FAST ASLEEP.

PAPA! WAKE UP!

WAKE UP, THAT YOU...



WE SAT FOR A WHILE LISTENING TO THE HOWLS! MY FATHER REASSEMBLED ME, HITTING MY BACK.

PROBABLY JUST AN OLD DOG HOWLING AT THE MOON, MY SON! GO BACK TO SLEEP!

P-YES, PAPA!



BUT LATE THAT NIGHT, I WAS AWAKENED BY...

PAPA! SOMEONE'S HAMMERING ON THE DOOR! WAKE UP!

WHA...? OH, EDWARD? WHO IS IT?



WE HEARD ANGRY VOICES! WE TI-TOO TO THE KITCHEN! FATHER WAS ARGUING WITH SOME MEN! SHERIFF HUDSON WAS WITH THEM.

NO! YOU ARE WRONG! I AM NO WEREWOLF! I SWEAR IT!

YOU'VE COME FROM SOMEBODY, DON'T YOU? WOLFSSAUR GEORGE HUNGARY!



WE COVERED THE DOOR WAY, FRIGHTENED, LISTENING...

YES! BUT I...

WE FOUND ANOTHER VICTIM! GEORGE HE WAS KILLED TONIGHT! TORN TO PIECES AND PARTIALLY EATEN! THERE'S A FULL MOON OUT TONIGHT, WEREWOLVES AT TOWN! WHEN THE MOON IS FULL!



AND WEREWOLVES ARE COMING FROM HUNGARY...

WE DON'T HAVE NO KILLING LIKE THIS BEFORE YOU'VE COME HERE!

SO YOU MUST BE THE WEREWOLF...



THEY GRABBED MY FATHER AND DRAGGED HIM FROM THE HOUSE.

PAPA! PAPA!

WE KNOW HOW TO GET RID OF A WEREWOLF, DEBRA! HARK, HERE, GAINED A SILVER BULLET!



AND THERE... IN THE MOONLIGHT... IN THE FAIRYWOOD... THEY DROPT MY FATHER WITH THAT SILVER BULLET.



PAPA... SOB... PAPA...

HE... HE'S DEAD, EDWARD! THEY KILLED HIM!



EDWARD LOOKED AT ME WITH TEAR-FILLED EYES...

PAPA WASN'T... SOB... THE WEREWOLF... WAS HE... SOB... SOB... SOB...

NO! HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN! I SAW HIM TOMORRY, SLEEPING... IN HIS ROOM!



EDWARD'S FACE BEGAN BRIMMING BACK HIS TEARS.

I'LL GET HIM! I'LL GET THE WEREWOLF! I KNOW WHO IT IS! I CAN TELL!

WHO, EDWARD? WHO IS IT?



IT'S THAT SHERIFF! DID YOU EVER NOTICE THE WAY HIS EYEBROWS BROW TOGETHER? THAT'S THE SIGN OF A WEREWOLF! NEXT MORNTH, WHEN THE MOON IS FULL, I'LL WAIT FOR HIM, AND...

WHAT CAN YOU DO, EDWARD? YOU HAVE NO POW... NO SILVER BULLET!



NO, BUT I HAVE THESE! A BLOOD-DROPT... AND A SILVER DOLLAR!

A BLOOD-DROPT? AND A SILVER DOLLAR? BUT HOW CAN YOU KILL A WEREWOLF WITH A SILVER DOLLAR...



IT TOOK EDWARD MANY DAYS TO FILE DOWN THE EDGE OF THE SILVER DOLLAR TILL IT WAS razor-sharp...

YOU SEE, PETER! ONCE I HAVE SHARPENED THE EDGE, I WILL HAVE A LETHAL SILVER MISSILE...

AND YOU WILL FIRE IT WITH THE SLIM-SHOT?



FACT! I'VE HEARD TO AVENGE OUR FATHER'S DEATH! HE WAS INNOCENT! AND I WILL PROVE IT!

WE WILL DO IT TOGETHER, EDWARD! IN THREE WEEKS, WHEN THE MOON IS FULL, WE WILL CLEAR OUR FATHER'S NAME TOGETHER!



AND SO I TOO SET ABOUT SHARPENING THE EDGE OF A SILVER DOLLAR, AND FABRICATING A POWERFUL SLIM-SHOT...



...AND WHEN THE NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON CAME, MY HOUSING BROTHER EDWARD AND I WERE READY...



COME, PETER! IT IS TIME! WE MUST GO.

YES, EDWARD!

WE CROSSED THE FIELDS TOWARD TOWN... LISTENING, HOPING...

WITH WHAT I HEARD NOTHING WAS LEFT?



AND THEN WE SAW IT... A SHADOWY FIGURE STEALING DOWN A LONELY COUNTRY ROAD...



LOOK! IS THAT HIM? UP AHEAD?

LET'S SEPARATE, PETER! YOU GO THAT WAY! I'LL GO THIS WAY!

BEFORE I COULD OBJECT, EDWARD HAD DARTED OFF INTO THE WOODS! I STOOD THERE FOR A MOMENT... HESITATING! THEN I SWUNG OFF INTO THE TREES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD! WE WERE GOING TO CIRCLE AROUND, BUT HE GOT AWAY SUCCESSFULLY...



EDWARD!

I RAN AS FAST AS I COULD TOWARD THE SCREAMING... SLIPPING THE RAZOR-SHARP SILVER DOLLAR INTO THE SLASH-SHOT...

EDWARD? I'M COMING!
I'M COMING!



AS I BURST OUT INTO THE CLEARING, I SAW IT! A HORRIBLE, HAIRY, RED-EYED CREATURE... ITS MOUTH DRIPPING BLOOD... BARING OVER ITS VICTIM...

EDWARD? I... OH, MY LORD!
WHAT HAVE YOU
DONE TO HIM...



I TOOK CAREFUL AIM...



...AND LET MY THUMB-SHOT SOAR...



THE SILVER DOLLAR ENTERED THE WEREWOLF'S THUNDERING THROAT...



...AND IT PITCHED FORWARD! AND THEN AS I WATCHED, THOSE DISTURBED FACES BREAK... THE HAIR DISAPPEARED... THE EYES DARKENED... AND THE AGONIZED FACE OF MY YOUNGER BROTHER TOOK SHAPE...

EDWARD, CHEER!
OH... OH... EDWARD...



HEH, HEH? YES, KIDDIE? FOLLO!
EDWARD WAS THE WEREWOLF ALL ALONG? ONLY HE DON'T EVEN KNOW IT! AND THAT'S THE STORY THE WIFE PETER DEEMED TOLD IT TO ME FROM THAT NIGHT, HE AND EDWARD DID CLEAR THEIR FATHER'S NAME? MISSED UP EDWARD'S THOUGHTS,

BY THE WAY PETER'S GIVEN ME A NICE REASON? THINK I'LL TURN IT OVER TO THE OLD WITCH? IT'S FOR ANOTHER DAY... COME - COME! SEE YOU LATER? P. E. BRADY?



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! LOOKS LIKE SUPERNATURAL IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY, FRIENDS! O.K., TOLD YOU A *WEREWOLF* STORY, SO I'LL TELL YOU ONE ABOUT *VAMPIRES!* WELCOME TO THE *VAULT OF HORROR!* THIS IS YOUR *KNOCK-ROCK-ROCK* BRICKERER! I CALL THIS BLOOD-SUCKLING TALE FROM MY BLOODY COLLECTION!

MIDNIGHT MESS!



THE CLOCK IN THE STEEPLE OF THE VILLAGE HALL CHIMED FIVE AS HAROLD MALDEN MOVED ACROSS THE SQUARE FROM THE RAILROAD STATION. IN THE DISTANCE, THE TRAIN WHISTLED OFF INTO THE BATHING TWILIGHT. HAROLD RAGED UP AT THE CLOCK TOWER STILL ECHOING THE LAST DRINK, LOOKED AROUND AT THE QUIET BUILDINGS Lining THE SQUARE, AND CHUCKLED.



HEH! THIS IS JUST THE KIND OF TOWN MY SISTER WOULD BE HAPPY IN! WHAT A *DEAD-LOOKING* PLACE!

THE VILLAGE SQUARE WAS STRANGELY DESERTED. HAROLD SET DOWN HIS VALISE AND SCRATCHED HIS HEAD...

"NOBODY AROUND? NO CAR? NO MOTOR? WELL, NOW IN BLADES WILL I FIND MY BROTHER'S HEED? ALL I KNOW IS THE ADDRESS!"



A NERVOUS LOOKING OLD MAN CAME OUT OF ONE OF THE SMALL STORES, LOOKED THE DOOR, AND HURRIED ACROSS THE SQUARE TOWARD HAROLD. HE KEPT LOOKING AROUND AS IF HE WERE BEING FOLLOWED—HAROLD CALLED TO HIM...

"HEY! HEY, HOO? WHERE'S SMOKE STREET? AND SMOKE STREET?"

"IN! SMOKE STREET— WEST... TWO BLOCKS! THEN EAST... THREE! BUT YOU'D BETTER HURRY! IT'S GETTING DARK!"



THE NERVOUS OLD MAN TROTTED ON PAST HAROLD, NOT EVEN STOPPING FOR AN INSTANT...

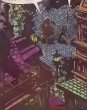
"SO IT'S GETTING DARK? SO WHAT?"

"YOU'RE A STRANGER HERE, AREN'T YOU? YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THEM!"



"NO? I DON'T? EP... KNOW ABOUT WHAT?"

"THE HAMPSTEAD?"



"THE... THE HOO? THE HAMPSTEAD? IN, O' HON..."

"BETTER HURRY! I'LL BE GUNNIN' YOU, HAMPSTEAD COME OUT AFTER GUNNIN'!"



THEN THE OLD MAN WAS GONE, UP A NARROW ALLEY! HAROLD LAUGHED AND CONTINUED ON ACROSS THE SQUARE. A SIGN CAUGHT HIS EYE.

"A? A RESTAURANT? I COULD DO WITH A BITE TO EAT! I'M STARVED!"



THE RESTAURANT WAS SMALL, BUT THE MIRRORRED WALL AT THE FAR END MADE IT APPEAR MUCH LARGER THAN IT ACTUALLY WAS, EXCEPT FOR ONE OR TWO PEOPLE WHO WERE FINISHING THEIR MEALS. THE PLACE WAS EMPTY, A WAITER CAME FORWARD...

"I, I'M HUNGRY, BUT WE ARE CLOSING! IT IS ALREADY DARK, YOU KNOW?"

"WHAT TIME? I'VE GOT TO GO! WHAT IF IT IS GETTING DARK? IT'S DARKER TIME... AND I'M HUNGRY!"



THE WAITER SHOOK HIS HEAD

WE CLOSE IN ORDER THAT OUR HELP MAY GET HOME BEFORE DAWN, SIR? THE VAMPIRES, YOU KNOW?

VAMPIRES? WHAT VAMPIRES?

FOR A MOMENT THE WAITER STARED AT HAROLD THEN HIS EYES FELL TO HIS SUITCASE...

OH! YOU'RE A STRANGER HERE! THEN YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING!

NO? I DON'T! WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

THERE HAVE BEEN SEVENTEEN CASES SO FAR. BODIES FOUND WITH EVERY DROP OF BLOOD DRAINED OUT OF THEM. THE WHOLE TOWN IS IN THE GRIP OF FEAR. NO SUCH THING!

NO! IT'S THE WORK OF VAMPIRES!

NEVERTHELESS, I SUSPECT THAT YOU GET TO WHERE YOU'RE GOING BEFORE IT BECOMES DARK AND THE VAMPIRES BEGIN TO ROAM THE STREETS LOOKING FOR A VICTIM!

OHAY! OHAY! I'M GOING! WHERE'S GAZZ SHANE STREET? CAN YOU TELL ME THAT?

OF COURSE! WEST...TWO BLOCKS THEN EAST...THREE! GOOD-NIGHT!

GOOD-NIGHT! HMM! IS EVERYBODY IN THIS TOWN NOT A VAMPIRE'S HMM?

HAROLD STALKED THROUGH THE TOWN TOWARD HIS SISTER'S HOUSE! AS HE WENT, HE COULD HEAR DOORS BEING LOCKED AND BOLTED, BLINDS BEING DRAWN, FINALLY...

YES! WHO'S OUT THERE?

SOON! IT'S ME! HAROLD! YOUR BROTHER!

HAROLD'S SISTER TRACY OPEN THE DOOR...

HAROLD! YOU...YOU WEREN'T OUT THERE... IN THE DARK!

OH, NO! DON'T! DON'T TELL ME YOU BELIEVE IN THIS VAMPIRE BUSINESS, FOO!

DOMINA LOOKED AND BOLTED THE DOOR BEHIND HAROLD, AND TURNED TO FACE HIM, HER EYES WIDE IN TERROR.

OF COURSE I BELIEVE IN THE VAMPIRES! SEVENTEEN VILLAGERS MURDERED ALREADY! BLOOD-SPAINED! WHAT ELSE COULD HAVE DONE IT...?

DOMINA? THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS VAMPIRES! THEY'RE MYTHS...



PERRAITS... PERRAITS... THERE'S A MORTAL WOUND LOOSE IN THIS TOWN? CERTAINLY THERE MUST BE A LOGICAL EXPLANATION! BUT NOT VAMPIRES! IT'S HAROLD'S GUILT!

ALL RIGHT, HAROLD! BELIEVE WHAT YOU WANT TO BELIEVE! NOW LET'S SORT OUT ABOUT IT! COME INSIDE! TELL ME! WHY THE SOBRIE WUFF?



WELL? WAS ON MY WAY TO THE GOLF AND I THOUGHT IT DROOP IN ON YOU.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, HAROLD! YOU'RE LOOKING WELL!

THAT NIGHT, HAROLD MADISON COULD NOT SLEEP! HE TOSSED AND TURNED ON THE GOLF DOMINA HAD SET UP FOR HIM. FINALLY HE GOT UP AND DRESSED...

OUT INTO THE DESERTED STREETS, HAROLD MOVED... DOWN SOLENT DARK SIDEWALKS... TOWARD THE VILLAGE SQUARE...



GUESS I'LL GO FOR A WALK!



EMPLOYED VAMPIRES!

EVERY DOOR, EVERY WINDOW THAT HAROLD PASSED WAS LOOKED UP TIGHT AND DARK! THE VILLAGE SQUARE WAS EMPTY AND SILENT...

NOT A HAZE OUT! THEY SURE ROLL THIS TOWN UP TIGHTER'S A DROOP AFTER DARK!



AND THEN HE HEARD IT... THE LAUGHTER AND THE MERRY CHATTER, IT CAME FROM A FAMILIAR BUILDING...

WELL I'LL BE! THE RESTAURANT I WAS IN THIS AFTERNOON! IT'S OPEN! THERE'RE PEOPLE GOING IN!



THE RESTAURANT WAS ALL LIT UP. PEOPLE SAT AT TABLES, TALKING AND EATING. HAROLD WENT IN...



THAT'S WHY I COULDN'T SLEEP! I WAS HUNGRY! GUESS I'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT!

HAROLD SAT DOWN AT A TABLE! HE LOOKED AROUND AT THE PEOPLE SEATED NEAR HIM, A WAITER APPROACHED! A DIFFERENT ONE FROM THE ONE HE'D SPOKE TO EARLIER...



CERTAINLY ARE SOME **ODD** LOOKING CHARACTERS OUT THIS TIME OF NIGHT?

WILL YOU HAVE THE **DINNER**, SIR... OR WOULD YOU...

THE WAITER LOOKED AT HAROLD WITH DARK PIERCING EYES... HAROLD SMILED UNCOMFORTABLY...



OH, SIR... THE **DINNER** WILL BE **ROAST** WITH **FRIES** OR... WHAT'S THE **MEAT** TONIGHT?

WELL... **SOUP**... **FRONCH-FRIED**... **COFFEE**... **HERBY**...

HAROLD LIKED HIS LIPS...



GODD' SAY I AM HUNGRY' NER, NER?

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

THE WAITER WENT AWAY AND CAME BACK WITH A GLASS OF JUICE...



AM I TOMORRO JUICE?

YEH FURRY!

HAROLD SIPPED THE CHILLED JUICE IN THE GLASS. IT TASTED SALTIER THAN USUAL... AND THINNER...



WELL! OH, WELL! CAN'T EXPECT MUCH IN A SMALL-TOWN RESTAURANT! THE WAITER'S LOOKING AT ME? I'D BETTER FINISH IT!

THE SOUP WAS HOT... BUT IF TOO WAS SALTIER THAN HAROLD WOULD'VE LIKED.



STRANGE! TASTING SOULION... I'VE **EVER** HAD **RICHER** THAN USUAL, TOO...

DO YOU LIKE YOUR **SOUP**? **COLD**, **WELL-DONE** OR **MEDIUM**...





IN THE OLD DAYS, HUMANITY HUNTED THEIR OWN FOOD... PREPARED IT THEMSELVES... HUNTERED FOR IT IN THE WILDS... HUNTED THEIR OWN MEATS... BUT NOW, WE, JUST LIKE MODERN MAN, LEAVE THE HUNTING TO THE PROFESSIONALS... WE LEAVE THE PREPARING TO THE PROFESSIONALS... TOO...

YOU MEAN...



THIS RESTAURANT SERVES BLOOD DISHES... LIKE A VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT SERVES VEGETABLE DISHES... BLOOD-JUICE-COCKTAIL... HOT BLOOD-CONDORNE... ROAST BLOOD-CLOTES... FRENCH-FRIED EGGS... BLOOD CHERRY...

CHORE...



I'M SORRY, HAROLD! LIKE THE OTHER SEVENTEEN THAT WANDERED INTO THIS RESTAURANT, YOU WILL HAVE TO BE SILENT! I CANNOT SAVE YOU!

THE TAP! THE TAP! THE TAP!



HAROLD WAS LIFTED SOBLY BY THE GIBBERING CROWD OF VAMPIRES WHILE HIS SISTER LOOKED ON UNCONCERNEDLY, ONE VAMPIRE BROUGHT A BOWL! ANOTHER... THE TAP...

THE TAP! THE TAP!

STOMP! STOMP!

A SQUEAL!



AND SO HAROLD WAS STRUNG UP... HEAD DOWN! THE TAP WAS INCIDENT INTO HIS JUGULAR VEIN! AND EACH OF THE VAMPIRES CAME, ONE BY ONE... AND FILLED ITS GLASS...

NOTHING LIKE THE REAL STUFF!

I'LL SAY!



KIDDER! AND THAT'S THE STORY, KIDDER! THAT'S WHAT VAMPIRES VAMPIRES DO THESE DAYS! THEY DINE IN BLOODHUNTER RESTAURANTS, OVER BUNDOON TO BUNDOON WHERE IS THERE ONE IN YOUR TOWN, YOU ASK? WELL, SOME NIGHT IF YOU FEEL UP TO IT, LOOK FOR IT! YOU CAN TELL IT BY THE EYES INSIDE! IT'S IN RED... AND IT SAYS, "POSITIVELY NO SIPPING THE BAKERS!" THE BOY WHO STARTED THIS CHAIN OF DRINKERIES IS A FANFIRED BURNING!

HE KNOWS THERE'S A 'SUCKER' SOME EVERY MINUTE! NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THE CRYPT-KEEPER! 'BYE!

HERE'S A YARN THAT FIGURES TO END UP PRETTY HORRIBLE...

BUSTED MARRIAGE!



JEFFREY HORN WAS A DESPERATE MAN. HE WANTED MONEY. HE WANTED THE COMFORTS MONEY COULD BRING HIM. AND LOUISE BRITTLING WAS RICH... VERY RICH, SO HE SWALLOWED HIS PRIDE... AND PROPOSED...

YOU'RE... VERY RICH, JEFFREY... BUT I DON'T LOVE YOU...!

LOUISE! AND DOESN'T MATTER, I LOVE YOU, BRIDES... IN TEN YEARS THAT'S WHAT'S IMPOR-



...TANT? I WISH YOU COULD FIND IT IN YOUR HEART TO LOVE ME!

I... I...

BUT JEFFREY HORN WAS NOT ONE TO GIVE UP EASILY. HE'D HEARD ABOUT THE LITTLE SHOP DOWNTOWN WITH THE STRANGE NATIVE PROPRIETOR...

I FOLLOWED HER WHEREVER SHE WENT. I PICKED UP THESE HAIR CLIPPINGS AND NAIL CLIPPINGS IN HER BEAUTY PARLOR! YOU SAID YOU'D HIDE THEM...

GOOD! GOOD! NOW YOU SAY YOU WANT TO MARRY ME...!



YES! I WANT HER TO CONSENT TO BE MY WIFE! I WANT US TO BE MARRIED!

LEAVE ME CLIPPINGS FROM FOUR INCH AND NAILS, AND COME BACK TOMORROW! I WILL BE READY!



THE NEXT DAY...

WHY THESE ARE NOTHING MORE THAN DUMB DOLLS THE KIND ONE SEES ON WEDDING CAKES!

NOT *DUH!* MR. MORRIS! THESE ARE FOOODOO DOLLS! THE BRIDE REPRESENTS MISS BRITTLING...



AND THE GROOM REPRESENTS YOU! TAKE THEM HOME! PUT THEM SOMEPLACE SAFE FROM HARM, WHATEVER HAPPENS TO THESE DOLLS, HAPPENS TO THE PERSON THEY REPRESENT!

I... I *KNOW* AND SINCE THEY ARE GETTING MARRIED, LOUISE AND I WILL BE MARRIED!



EXACTLY! AND MAY I SUGGEST THAT YOU *SAVE* THESE DOLLS PLACED ON FOUR *OWN* WEDDING CAKE. SUCH ARTICLES ARE HIGHLY TREASURED, IT WILL INSURE THEIR SAFETY...



YOU... YOU HEAR THAT IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO THESE DOLLS, AN ARM BREAK OFF... OR A LEG... THAT THE SAME THING WILL HAPPEN TO THE PERSON...

IT IS THE FOOODOO SPELL! YOU MUST TAKE THE BAG WITH THE GROOM! THAT IS WHY I SUGGESTED USING THEM ON YOUR CASE. AFTER THE WEDDING, PUT THEM UNDER GLASS, AND GUARD THEM WELL! ON, BE CAREFUL NOT TO GET OFF THE SLEEPER OF AM, OR YOU AND YOUR FUTURE WIFE MAY SUFFER!

I'LL... BE CAREFUL! THANK YOU! THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!



IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE LOUISE BRITTLING'S ATTITUDE TOWARD JEFFREY BEGAN TO CHANGE, UNTIL...

OH, DARLING! AT FIRST I THOUGHT YOU WERE MERELY IN LOVE WITH MY MONEY... BUT NOW I KNOW YOU LOVE ME FOR MYSELF! YES, YES... I'LL MARRY YOU!

LOUISE! LOUISE... AT LAST...



AND SO THEY WERE MARRIED! AND THE PAIR STOOD UPON THE LATTER WEDDING CAKE... AND SMILED...

JEFFREY IS SO HAPPY! LIKE THOSE FIGURES... ON OUR CAKE!

LET'S *SAVE* THOSE FIGURES, MONEY FOR ALWAYS! THEY WILL BE A SYMBOL OF OUR HAPPINESS!



SO WITH SLICK LIKE THAT, JEFFREY MANAGED TO HAVE THE VOODOO FIGURES PLACED IN A LOCKED CHINA CLOSET UNDER A GLASS BELL IN LOUISE'S PALATIAL HOME...

THERE! AND EVERY TIME WE HAVE A SPAT OR A MISUNDERSTANDING, THESE FIGURES WILL REMIND US OF HOW GADDDY WE WERE AT THIS MOMENT!



OPEN THE WINDOW, JEFF! IT'S SO HOT IN HERE...

JEFFREY LAUGHED AND SHOT A TROUBLED GLANCE AT THE FIGURES INSIDE THE CHINA CLOSET...

HEN! IT'S ONLY WARM FOR NOW! BRACE, MOTHER! GO ON JUSTAS! I'LL BE UP IN A MINUTE!

ALL RIGHT, JEFF! BUT DON'T BE LONG, WILL YOU? WHEN? IT'S awfully stuffy in here!



HE WATCHED AS LOUISE LANDED ON THE MARBLE STAIRCASE... AT SOON AS SHE D ROSE INTO HER ROOM, JEFFREY UNLOCKED THE CHINA CLOSET, GASPING FOR BREATH...

THAT WAS STUPID OF ME! I FORGOT ABOUT GETTING OFF THE AIR SUPPLY! TOMORROW I'LL HAVE TO GET A BELL WITH HOLES IN IT! MEANTIME...



JEFF SLIPPED A MATCH STICK UNDER THE EDGE OF THE BELL...

MEANTIME, I'LL PROP IT UP SO AIR CAN GET IN!



THEN HE LOCKED THE CHINA CLOSET AND HOCKETED THE KEY. HE WENT UPSTAIRS, LOUISE SAT ON THE BED SMILING AT HIM...

THAT'S BETTER! WHAT WAS IT?

OH...! SOME DAMN FOOL HAD FOUNDED UP THE THERMOSTAT!



AND SO, WITH THE AID OF VOODOO... JEFF HADN HAD BETTER WHAT HE WANTED! HE'D MARRIED LOUISE BRITTLING... AND SIX MILLIONS, THE NEXT DAY HE PURCHASED A NEW GLASS BELL... HAD TINY HOLES DRILLED IN IT... AND SUBSTITUTED IT IN THE CHINA CLOSET. ALL WENT WELL FOR A YEAR OR THERE...

LOUISE, I WISH YOU WOULDN'T DRAG ME TO THESE PARTIES! YOU KNOW HOW I...

WUAG! SOMEONE'S COMING! WHY, YOU GARD!



... AND THIS MUST BE YOUR NEW HOUSEWIFE! WELL, INTRODUCTION ME!

JEFF! THIS IS EVE PORTER! EVE'S BEEN IN SLOPES FOR TWO YEARS...

GLAD TO MEET YOU, EVE!



EVE FORSTER WAS YOUNG AND LOVELY. SHE WAS ATTRACTED TO JEFF! THAT EVENING, AS THEY DANCED...

TOO BAD I DON'T MEET YOU BEFORE LARRY DID, JEFF! YOU'RE QUITE A GUY!

PERHAPS... PERHAPS WE CAN HAVE DINNER TOGETHER SOMETIME, EVE!



AND SO, EVE AND JEFF BEGAN SEEING EACH OTHER... SECRETLY! THEIR ATTRACTION FOR EACH OTHER GREW STRONGER EACH TIME THEY MET. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THEY REALIZED THAT THEY WERE FALLING IN LOVE...

DIVORCE LARRY, DARLING! WOULD YOU MARRY ME? WE'LL GET ALONG SOMEHOW! I WANT A SMALL ROOM!

I... I LOVE YOU EVE... BUT THERE'S ANOTHER WAY! WANT A BETTER WAY!



IT WAS LOUISE'S HEALTH THAT JEFF WAS THINKING OF. HE HATED TO GIVE THAT UP, AND THERE WAS A WAY... ONE WAY TO HAVE BOTH... BOTH LOUISE'S MONEY... AND EVE... SO...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, JEFF?

I'M PUTTING THESE WEDDING CAKE PIECES UNDER SEPARATE GLASS BELLS. LOUISE'S THOUGHT THEY'D LOOK BETTER THAT WAY...



WHAT JEFF WAS DOING WAS TAKING THE OLD GLASS BELL, THE ONE WITHOUT ANY HOLES AND PLACING IT OVER LOUISE'S FINGER. HE PUT HIS OWN UNDER THE ONE WITH THE VENTILATION! LATER THAT NIGHT...

LARRY... JEFF? GASP! I... I CAN'T BREATHE!

WHAT IS IT, LARRY? WHAT'S WRONG? SHALL I CALL A DOCTOR?



IT WAS SO SIMPLE! LOUISE'S BREATHING BECAME MORE AND MORE LABORED! THE DOCTOR CAME! HE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT!

IT'S AS IF THE... OF SOMETHING WERE SUFFOCATING! MUST BE HER HEART!

DOCTOR! DO SOMETHING!

BUT JEFF KNEW THAT NOTHING COULD BE DONE FOR LOUISE. IN THE CHINA CLOSET, THE LAST TRACE OF AIR INSIDE THE BELL, INCLUDING LOUISE'S GOOD FINGER-RING, VANISHED, AND...

WHY'S DEAD, JEFF? I'M SORRY...

YOU... YOU DID ALL YOU COULD, DIDN'T YOU? IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT!



AND NOW JEFF WAS FREE! FREE TO MARRY EVE! AND LOUISE'S MONEY WAS ALL HIS...

AGREED TO ARRANGE... MUST TO MUST...



AFTER THE FUNERAL...JEFF WANTED TO DESTROY LOUISE'S IMAGE... BUT HE RECONSIDERED...

I STILL HAVE TO PRESERVE MY FIGURINE! I'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE *MINE* IS KEPT FROM HARM! THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY...



AND SO...

WHAT IF IT, JEFF? WHAT'S THE SURPRISE?

LOOK!



EVE HAD NEVER SEEN THE PROPOSEE IN LOUISE'S CHINA CLOSET? SO IT WAS EASY TO POOL HER...

I BOUGHT THEM FOR OUR WEDDING CAKE? OH, JEFF... HOW SWEET!



LOUISE'S FIGURE STOOD IN HER AIR-TIGHT GLASS BELL...

AFTER THE WEDDING WE'LL KEEP THEM ALWAYS, AS A REMIND OF OUR LOVE... UNDER THESE GLASS BELLS...

OH, JEFF, DARLING! WHAT A NICE THOUGHT! OF COURSE...



EVERYTHING WAS PERFECT. WHEN THE PROPER TIME HAD ELAPSED AND THE WEDDING GAY WAS SET, JEFF REMOVED THE TWO FIGURINES FROM THE CHINA CLOSET... AND... FOR THE TOP OF THE WEDDING CAKE, PERFECTION! JUST ONE THING? BE VERY CAREFUL WITH THEM! UNDERSTAND?

OH... OH, WHEN NOW, I WILL BE EXTRA CAREFUL!



BUT WHEN THE AIR HIT THE FIGURE OF LOUISE, SOMETHING STRANGE BEGAN TO TAKE PLACE. AFTER ALL... LOUISE HAD BEEN DEAD FOR A LONG TIME...

AREN'T SOMETHING SWEETS IN HIS BAKERY, PIERRE...

IT SEE THESE FIGURE... ON DE CAKE? BUT WHAT CAN I DO? M'SIEU HORN INSISTED...



AND AT THE WEDDING RECEPTION...

OH, JEFF! LOOK! THE BRIDE'S FIGURE ON THE CAKE! IT'S ALL MOULTY AND ROTTING...

GHOST...



AFTER THE WEDDING...

THROW THEM AWAY, JEFF! THE BRIDE IS POTRISI! IT SMELLS LIKE A GRAVE!

LET ME SAVE THE GROOM'S FIGURINE, EVE! I'LL HAVE PIEDVE MAKE US ANOTHER BRIDE!



JEFF DROPPED THE VENTILATED GLASS BELL OVER THE GROOM FIGURINE...

ALL RIGHT NOW... COME TO BED, HUNT?

SOON AS I FINISH THIS AWAY!



JEFF DROPPED THE FOUL-SMELLING FIGURINE OF LOUISE INTO THE GARBAGE CAN, AND WENT TO BED.

OH, JEFF! AT LAST, MARRIED?

EVE... SAST...



DOWNSTAIRS, IN THE GARBAGE CAN... THE ROTTING FIGURINE OF LOUISE STARED... MOVED? IT CLIMBED FROM THE LITTER-FILLED CAN...



...STUMBLED ACROSS THE KITCHEN AND INTO THE DINING ROOM WHERE JEFF'S FIGURINE STOOD UNDER THE GLASS...



...CLIMBED TO THE TABLE AND PUSHED...



UPSTAIRS, IN THE BEDROOM, THE LIGHT HAD JUST GONE OUT? SUDDENLY, EVE SCREAMED...



HIS HYSTERICAL SHRIERS ECHOED THROUGH THE HOUSE, DOWN INTO THE DINING ROOM WHERE JEFF'S VOODOON FIGURE LAY SMASHED INTO A HUNDRED JAGGED PIECES.



HEH, HOW SO EVE'S NEW BROOM-GROOM JUST FELL APART... AND ON THEIR WEDDING NIGHT, FOR TOY TOY WELL, IT JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU! A MODERN MARRIAGE CAN'T LAST IF IT DOESN'T BEGIN SOLIDLY! AND AT LEAST EVE FOODS GOT THAT JEFF WAS JUST A CHEAT-ER IN TIME! NOW THE OLD



WITCH IS STARRING UP HER NEW, HOT, READY TO GO OUT ANOTHER MARRIAGE HELPING TO HOLD YOUR NOSE... EYES RIGHT!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HELLO! SO IT'S SUPERHEROES YOU WANT, EMP? WELL... YOU'VE HAD A WEREWOLF STORY... A VAMPIRE STORY... AND A VOOODOO STORY! NOW LET'S SEE! AH! I'VE GOT THE RECIPE! CHECK IT! I'LL COOK UP A MURDER STORY IN MY CRACKLY CAULDRON! YEP! IT'S YOUR SAVVYERS— ONE! THE OLD WITCH, READY TO DISH OUT HER TASTY TALE OF TERROR FOR THIS ISSUE OF C.K.'S MAG! SO CRACK UP TO THE BUBBLING POT... TUCK YOUR SAVVYERS UNDER YOUR CHINS... FASTEN YOUR SHOOL CAPS... AND FEAST ON THE FOLLY PAGE 2 CALL...

THIS WRAPS IT UP!



THE PLANET SAID! DARK SUN BLAZED DOWN UPON THE THREE ARCHAEOLOGISTS, BURNING THE PER-SEUTATION FROM THEIR FORES AND BURNING IT IN TINY STREAMS DOWN THEIR FACES. THEY MOVED FORTH... FIRST ONE, THEN THE OTHER... DIS-SEND INTO THE FURNACE SAND AT THE BASE OF THE TOWERING CLIFF...

IT'S NOT TO BE HERE!
IT'S NOT YET EVERY
SHED OF EVIDENCE
WE'VE PRICED FORGOTTEN!
SAYS THIS IS THE
SPOT!

DO NOT BE DISAPPOINTED
IF IT IS NOT, ANNOY!
WE HAVE BEEN WRONG
BEFORE! WHY DON'T
YOU REST WHY?
REMEMBER... YOUR
HEART...



DOCTOR ARNOLD HURLED BUNNERS SAT DOWN AND WIPED HIS SOAKING WET FACE WITH HIS HANDS. "WHY? HE STUCK HIS TWO ASSOCIATES... PROFESSOR THOMAS STEEL AND DOCTOR JEROME GRABEL... AS THEY CONTINUED DIGGING...

"BERRY WE ARE... ON THE VERGE OF THE MOST RELIABLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND OF THE CENTURY. AND I HAVE TO WATCH MY HEART."

"YOU WERE ADVISED NOT EVEN TO GO ALONE ON THIS EXPEDITION, ARNOLD. NO LESS DID YOU... THAT?"

"BERRY? I'M AS HEALTHY AS A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD? JUST BECAUSE I HAD A SLIGHT HEART ATTACK..."

"DOCTOR ARNOLD COULD BE FATAL. ARNOLD! GET THAT THROUGH YOUR STUPIDITY! YOUR SKILL!"

"TOM, ARNOLD LOOK..."



DOCTOR JEROME GRABEL POINTED AT THE SPOT WHERE THEY'D BEEN DIGGING...

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE EXCAVATION WAS A ROUND IRON RING IMBEDDED IN A MASS, PARTIALLY UNCOVERED SLAB OF STONE...

SOON, THE STONE SLAB HAD BEEN FULLY CLEARED OF SAND. AS ARNOLD ANTICIPATED, THOMAS AND JEROME TUGGED AT IT.

"WHAT IS IT, JEROME?"

"YOU'VE FOUND SOMETHING!"

"THE ENTRANCE? THE ENTRANCE TO THE TOMB?"

"GIVE ME A SHOVE! LET ME..."

"ARNOLD! TAKE IT EASY! PLEASE..."

"I'LL FINISH UNCOVERING THE SLAB!"

"IT'S COMING LOOSE! I'LL GIVE YOU A HAND..."

"WE CAN... CAN MANAGE A LITTLE MORE..."



FINALLY THE LARGE STONE SLAB WAS SWUNG AWAY, REVEALING A DARK OPENING WITH DUSTY STEPS DESCENDING INTO THE BLACKNESS. THE MUSTY ODOUR OF DECAY AND ROT, OF THINGS LONG BURIED AND AIR THREE THOUSAND YEARS OLD, BEARDED THEIR NOSTRILS...

FOOTSTEPS ECHOED INTO THE SHADOWY BLACKNESS, SHATTERING THE SILENCE OF CENTURIES. FLICKERING LIGHT FROM THE LANTERN THOMAS CARRIED CARVED WALLS THAT HAD NOT FELT LIGHT FOR OVER A HUNDRED GENERATIONS. THE THREE MEN DESCENDED INTO THE SHAFT...

"WE'VE FOUND IT! WE'VE FOUND IT!"

"THE TOMB OF HEM-BO-KANNA, FIFTH PHAROAH OF EGYPT..."

"I'VE COUNTED FIFTY-FIVE STEPS ALREADY!"

"WE'RE NEARLY AT THE BOTTOM..."



THE STEPS ENDED BEFORE A SMALL DOOR. ITS SURFACE WAS EXQUISITELY DECORATED WITH TYPICAL EXAMPLES OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ARTISTRY. OVER THE DOOR WAS A TABLET INSCRIBED WITH HIEROGLYPHS.

WHAT DOES IT SAY, THOMAS? YOU'RE THE HIEROGLYPHIC EXPERT.

IT SAYS, 'BYRONS THIS DOOR LIES EXALTED NEAN-MU-KAMMA, FIFTH PHAROAH OF ALL EGYPT. LET THIS BE A WARNING TO ALL WHO TRESPASS. DEATH WILL COME TO THOSE WHO ENTER HIS TOM. KAN-MU-KAMMA WILL RISE TO AVENGE THE DISTURBANCE OF ITS SANCTITY.'



JEROME'S LAUGHTER WAS THIN AND FORGED WITH NEUVOLISM. IT SUPPLED THROUGH THE SILENCE AND BOUNDED UP THE STAIRS OF THE SHAFT...

REN, HERE TYPICAL OF THE WARNINGS PLACED AT THE ENTRANCES TO OTHER PHAROAH'S TOMBS...

THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO SCARE OFF WANDERING BANDS OF THIEVES WHO MIGHT HAVE SNEAKED INTO THE TOMBS AND STOLEN THE TREASURES BURIED WITH THE PHAROAHS...



ARNOLD TRIED TO PUSH THE DOOR OPEN.

IT'S SEALED!

WE'LL HAVE TO BRASH IT! LEAVE A HAND HERE, JEROME! STEP AWAY, ARNOLD!



FLIPPING THEIR FULL WEIGHT AGAINST THE SEALED TOM-ENTRANCE DOOR, DOCTOR GRABEL AND PROFESSOR STEEL FINALLY MANAGED TO UNLATCH IT DOWN...

BACK!

LOOK FOR THE FLOOR!

SKELTONS!



THE WHITENED BONES STIRRED UP AT THEM AS IF THEY SOON ENJOYED A SECRET THEY WOULD NOT SHARE.

PERHAPS THESE ARE THE REMAINS OF THOSE WHO ONCE BROKE IN.

IMPOSSIBLE! THE DOOR WAS SEALED!



THEN WHO ARE THEY?

WORKMEN? PERHAPS SERVANTS... WHO INTERRED NEAN-MU-KAMMA AND THEN WERE MURDERED SO THAT THE SECRET OF THE TOM'S LOCATION WOULD BE KEPT.



THOMAS BARRIED FORWARD.

JEWELS! JEWELS! ARNOLD, JEROME... COME... SEE...

GOOD LORD! A FORTUNE IN PRECIOUS STONES!



PROFESSOR THOMAS STEEL SCOOPED UP HANDFULS OF THE SPARKLING GEMS HUNGRIPLY...

ROUBIN'S EMERALDS? SAPPHIRES? MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH!

AND THE GEMS THAT HOLD THEM ARE SOLID GOLD!

THIS IS THE GREATEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY! I SAID IT WOULD GET

TAKE IT EASY, ARNOLD! I DON'T EXPOSE YOURSELF! REMEMBER... YOUR HEART!

HERE! IN HERE! IT'S THE BURIAL CHAMBER!



THE SANDS OF THE DEEP MOUNTAINS OF JEAN-BO-BOURNA!

THOMAS! HELP ME LIFT THE LID!

GET THAT END, JEROME!

THE LID OF THE CERCOPHAGUS WAS REMOVED, REVEALING THE MUMMY OF JEAN-BO-BOURNA!



PERFECTLY PRESERVED!

WHAT A FIND! WE MUST GET A MESSAGE BACK TO THE MUSEUM!

THOMAS STARED AT ARNOLD... BUT... BUT IF WE REPORT THAT WE'VE FOUND THE TOMB... WE'LL HAVE TO TURN THE TREASURE OVER TO THEM.

WELL, OF COURSE, THOMAS! IT BELONGS TO THEM... BUT WE FOUND IT! WE SWEATED AND BURNED OUT IN THAT HOT SUN UNTIL WE DISCOVERED IT! BUT THAT'S RIGHT, JEROME!

THOMAS! I'M ASHAMED OF YOU! OF COURSE THE TREASURE BELONGS TO THE MUSEUM.

JEROME TOOK THOMAS BY THE ARM AND JERRED HIM INTO A CORNER.

WHY ARE YOU FOOL? CAN'T YOU SEE A HUNDRETS TOO RIGHT? YOU CAN CLAIM THE TREASURE FOR YOURSELF!

THEN WE'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HIM! HE STANDS IN OUR WAY...



LATER THAT NIGHT, IN THE CAMP OF THE THREE
ARCHAEOLOGISTS NEAR THE ENTRANCE TO THE TOMB...

IS HE ASLEEP?
YES! NOW THIS IS WHAT YOU DO! GO
DOWN INTO THE TOMB! UNWRAP THE
BODY OF TRAH-NU-KARMA AND WRAP
YOURSELF IN ITS WINDINGS...



THEN SCOUT OR SCREAM! I'LL AWAKEN
ARNOLD AND TELL HIM THAT YOU MUST GO
DOWN THERE! WHEN WE REACH THE BURIAL
CHAMBER, YOU GO INTO A SLOWLY AOT,
AND I'LL START SCOUTING ABOUT
THE COURSE...



EXASPERATED WHEN
WE BRING HIS BODY
BACK TO GARD, HE'LL
CLAIM WE HAD A
HEAVY ATTACK
FROM DISAPPOINTMENT
OVER THE FAILURE
OF OUR EXPEDITION!



ALL RIGHT! GO
AHEAD! AND HURRY!
WAIT FOR
MY SHOUT!



THOMAS WENT DOWN INTO THE
TOMB! JEROME SAT IN HIS OCT FOR
A LONG TIME... GROWING MORE AND
MORE UNREADY! FINALLY...



ARNOLD SAT BOLT UPRIGHT ON HIS COFF! JEROME
LEAPED TO HIS FEET! THOMAS'S BLOOD-CURDLING
SCREAM CAME DOWN...



ARNOLD STARTED DOWN THE TOMB STEPS... JEROME
FOLLOWING, SMILING...



SUDDENLY, THEY REACHED THE TREASURE CHAMBER. THOMAS'S LAMP SHOT UPON THE FLOOR ILLUMINATING THE ENTIRE ROOM. BEYOND WAS THE BURIAL CHAMBER. ARNOLD STOPPED.

OH, MY LORD! LOOK! IT... IT'S THE MUMMY!



HE CAME FROM THE BURIAL CHAMBER... BRANGLING ALONG... TOTTERING NEARLY... HIS WINDINGS RANGING LOUDLY! SOMEONE HAD TO CONTROL HIMSELF TO KEEP FROM LAUGHING! THOMAS... LOOKED SO COMICAL! THEN... JEROME WENT INTO HIS AGIT...

THE GUARD, ARNOLD! THE DEATH WILL COME TO THOSE WHO ENTER HIS TOMB. EAR-MU-SAHNA... WELL... CHUCK... RISE!



THE WALKING FIGURE STUMBLED FORWARD... THE GUARD IS TRUE, ARNOLD! THE MUMMY HAS RISE!



IT WAS ALMOST UPON THEM...



...HEARTY



ARNOLD CRUMPLED TO THE FLOOR. JEROME AGED TO EXAMINE HIM.



JEROME BEGAN TO LAUGH! THE WALKING FIGURE STOPPED...



...GOOD WORK, THOMAS! GOOD WORK! BUT ONE THING...

JEROME DREW THE PISTOL FROM UNDER HIS SHIRT...

"ONE THING YOU *DON'T* COUNT ON, THOMAS! YOU SEE? I WANT THAT TREASURE FOR MYSELF!" THOMAS FORGOT HIS ANSWER.



JEROME STARED AT THE SHAKING FIGURE BEFORE HIM.



THE BULLET TOOK THROUGH THE WRAPPAGE BUT THE FIGURE DID NOT BELL...

"FOR GOD'S SAKE! I SHOT YOU, THOMAS! DIE!"



JEROME BACKED OFF...EMPTYING HIS GUN INTO THE WRINGING-ENGAGED FIGURE...



BUT THE MUMMY KEPT GOING. JEROME BANGED INTO THE BURIAL CHAMBER. THE SANDCHAMBER WAS OPEN.

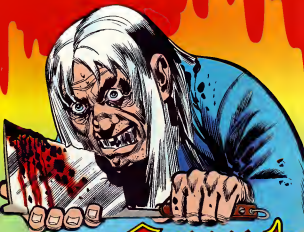


THE MAN IN THE MUMMY SAID IN A LOUD VOICE: "THOMAS! THOMAS!" THEN... THEN... CHORE!



SEE, HE'LL DO ANYWAY! WHAT'S HIS NAME? TOOK CARE OF THE DISTURBANCE OF HIS SANCTITY AS THE CURSE MAP PREDICTED. AFTER THAT HE TOSSED THE BODIES ON THE PILE WITH THE OTHER SKELETONS... YANKED... SHUT THE FRONT SLAB ONCE MORE... AND WENT BACK TO SLEEP! WHICH IS MORE THAN YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO, NOW THAT YOU'VE FIMBLED BY... *TALK OF HONOR!* YES, NOW!

THE MUMMY WAS RIGHT! BANGING... GROANS... ALMOST... TOUCHING HIM.



The Crypt Keeper



TERROR



NO. 36
JUNE-JULY

TALES



10¢

FROM THE

CRYPT

FEATURING



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER

IN THIS ISSUE
E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY
RAY BRADBURY
AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!



THE



"ARTIST OF THE ISSUE" • GEORGE EVANS



Latest permanent addition to the E.C. family, George R. Evans was born Feb. 3, 1920, in Harwood, Pa., of English and Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry. When George was nine, his family moved to Kulpmont, Pa., a coal-mining town. George's early art training came at fifteen from a correspondence course, which he paid for by working as a store clerk, coal-trucker, and mill hand. He also attended the Scranton Art School for one year. At 16, he had already started to sell illustrations to airplane pulp magazines, supplementing his income by sign-painting. Came the war, and George spent three years in the AAF, where, by diligence, application, and K.P., he rose to the grade of Plc. Decorations: one (1) Good Conduct Medal, grudgingly awarded. While in the army, George was stationed for a spell on Long Island. He liked it so much that upon being discharged, he came back there to live with his bride, whom he'd married six months previously. After returning to civilian life, George's first job was as a staff artist for another comic publishing house. He also attended night classes at the Art Students League in N. Y. C. George, his lovely wife Evelyn, and their four-year-old daughter, Carol, are now living in a cute little ranch house in Levittown, Long Island. His hobbies include: aviation . . . especially World War I vintage, loafing, sports of all kinds, loafing, eating, and . . . you guessed it . . . loafing! George's work . . . which has been enthusiastically received by you readers . . . appears in E.C.'s three horror mags, two war mags, and two SuspensStory mags!

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! WELCOME, BOILS AND BOWLS... WELCOME TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR. THIS IS YOUR HORROR-
MOST, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, INVITING YOU IN TO HEAR ANOTHER SHASTLY SELECTION FROM MY DISGUST-
ING COLLECTION. PERHAPS, BEFORE I START MY CHILLING TALE, YOU MIGHT LIKE TO PLAY A LITTLE
GAME WITH ME? LIKE... SAY... OLD MAID? I HAVE A REAL LIVE OLD MAID! NO? Oh... TOO BAD! THEN
I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURLING TARY I CALL...

**FARE TONIGHT,
FOLLOWED BY
INCREASING
CLOTTYNES...**



YOU SLAM DOWN THE TRUNK-LID OF YOUR TAXI-CAB AND LOOK AROUND. THE NIGHT IS DAMP AND A FAINT TRACE OF FOG DRIFTS IN FROM THE BAY. CHILLING YOU TO THE BONE, YOU STAND THERE FOR A MOMENT, SHIVERING. YOU FUMBLE IN YOUR JACKET POCKET FOR A CIGARETTE, PULL OUT A HALF EMPTY PACK AND SHAKE ONE BETWEEN YOUR LIPS. THE FLAME OF THE MATCH, FLARING UP IN THE BLOOD, BURNS YOUR EYES, AND EVEN AFTER YOU'VE BLOWN IT OUT, ITS GLOW STILL DANCES BEFORE YOU...



GRRRR... **NICE NIGHT...
FOR A MURDER!**

YOU SHUFFLE AROUND TO THE FRONT OF YOUR CAR, BRINE OPEN THE DOOR, AND SETTLE INSIDE ON THE MOIST-COLD LEATHER DRIVER'S SEAT. YOU SIT THERE FOR A MOMENT, SUCKING IN THE DRY SMOKE FROM YOUR BUTT AND SWALLOWING IT WHOLE INTO YOUR LUNGS. THEN YOU START THE ENGINE.

THINK I'LL CRUISE THE WEST SIDE, TONIGHT!



THE FOG HAS SETTLED ITS BLANKET OF GREY MIST UPON YOUR WINDSHIELD, SO YOU SNAP ON THE WIPERS. INDUSTRIOUS LITTLE FINGERS WHIP BACK AND FORTH, SHAKING THE WATER AWAY. YOU PEER THROUGH THE CLEAR OPENING AT THE DISTORTED ASPHALT AHEAD. THE STREETS ARE DESERTED.

CRUISE? NOT AROUND! AROUND! WHAT A NIGHT TO TRY TO SCRAPE UP A FARE!



NOW IT HAS BEGUN TO RAIN, A SOFT DRIZZLE AT FIRST, THEN HEAVIER AND HEAVIER... THE WATER CARBOADING BEFORE YOU... THE INDUSTRIOUS LITTLE WIPERS SCRAMBLING MADLY BACK AND FORTH... CLEARING IT AWAY, FIRST TO ONE SIDE... THEN THE OTHER.

WELL, THAT FINISHED IT! I'LL NEVER GET A FARE, NOW...



YOU CRUISE FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER, SEARCHING THE SIDEWALKS FOR A SIGNALING PASSERBY... A HOMEWARD-BOUND CUSTOMER. BUT YOU SEE NO ONE. YOU GRIND AND PULL UP TO A DESERTED CROSSING.

NO USE WASTING GAS. I'LL PARK HERE BY THE SUBWAY EXIT.



YOU SHUT OFF THE ENGINE AND GET BACK, EXTRACTING ANOTHER BUTT FROM YOUR EMPTY PACK. A POOR BEAST TELLS YOU THAT A SUBWAY TRAIN HAS PULLED IN. A FEW SECONDS LATER, FIGURES POUR FROM THE SUBWAY EXIT...

TAXI? TAXILADY? TAXI?



THE SUBWAY RIDERS HURRY OFF INTO THE WET GLOOM. THE NEWSIEK AT THE CORNER CALLS AFTER THEM, TRYING TO UNLEASH HIS NIGHT'S PAPER DOGS.

READ ALL ABOUT IT! ANOTHER BODY FOUND! ANOTHER MURDER! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

TAXI? TAXI? TAXI?



THE RUSHING SHADOWS ARE GONE. THE NIGHT AND THE RAIN SETTLE DOWN AGAIN. YOU STARE ACROSS THE MIRRORING SIDEWALK TO THE NEWSSTAND. ANOTHER MURDER. CURIOSITY GETS THE BETTER OF YOU. YOU SNAP OPEN THE CAR-DOOR AND DART THROUGH THE RAIN TO THE PROTECTION OF THE STAND'S OVERHANG...

PAPER, MISTERY?

YEAH? THANKS!



YOU SETTLE BACK IN YOUR CAB AND MORE, LIGHT UP ANOTHER BUTT, AND OPEN THE PAPER. THE HEADLINES SCREAM AT YOU...

THE CORPSE OF A THIRTY YEAR OLD WOMAN WAS FOUND DRAINED OF ITS BLOOD LAST NIGHT THIS IS THE THIRTIETH VICTIM TO DATE...



ANOTHER MURDER. FORTYSEVEN OF THEM NOW. EACH BODY DRAINED OF ITS BLOOD. YOUR EYES SWEEP OVER THE COLUMNS OF TINY PRINT. THE DORY DETAILS. SUDDENLY, A PARAGRAPH CATCHES YOUR ATTENTION...

A SUGGESTION THAT A VAMPIRE MIGHT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE MURDERS WAS OFFERED BY DR. EGBERT MULLER, NOTED MYTHOLOGIST. POLICE HAVE REJECTED THIS POSSIBILITY.



YOU SHIVER. THE WORK OF A VAMPIRE. YOU LOOK AROUND UNCOMFORTABLY, PEERING OUT AT THE DOWNPOUR. THE RAIN POUNDS DOWN ON YOUR CAR-ROOF. CHATTERING LOUDLY...

A... A VAMPIRE? WHO WOULD BELIEVE THAT!



THE NIGHT STORM IS A TORRENT BEFORE YOUR EYES. THE DARKNESS MELTS FROM THE BLACKNESS ABOVE AND SPATTERS DOWN ON THE ENGINE HOOD... CASCADES DOWN THE WINDSHIELD IN SHEETS OF DANCING LIGHTS. SUDDENLY HE IS BEHIND YOU, HIS BLACK OVERCOAT COLLAR TURNED UP, COVERING THE LOWER PART OF HIS FACE... HIS BLACK HAT-BRIM TURNED DOWN, SHIELDING THE UPPER PART. ONLY HIS EYES GLARE LIKE FIRE-LIGHTS FROM THE RECESS OF THEIR SOCKETS...



HE MUTTERS THE STREET AND NUMBER AND SLIDES INTO THE BACK SEAT. HE CARRIES A BRIEFCASE, WHICH HE HOLDS ON HIS LAP. YOU MESH SEATS AND PULL AWAY, CRUMMING. A CUSTOMER... AT LAST, YOU GLANCE AT HIM IN THE MIRROR...



THE ANSWER IS CURT, ALMOST EBULLENT. IT IS A BREF ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE CANNOT NOT TO CONVERSE. YOU SPRING AND GAZE YOUR HEAR THROUGH THE REFLECTIONS AND THE TORRENTS TOWARD THE ADDRESS HE'S GIVEN YOU.



THE STREET IS IN ONE OF THE WORST NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CITY... A NARROW, LITTER-STREWN, COBBLE-STONE ALLEY NESTED BETWEEN DAD-FACED, STAFFING TENEMENTS. YOUR FARE STEPS OUT INTO THE DOWNPOUR...



HE SCURRIES INTO A DARKENED HALLWAY AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE SHADOWS. YOU SHRINK, GLANCED AT THE METER, AND SETTLE BACK TO WAIT THE RAIN IS LETTING UP NOW. THE STREET IS A BLACK MIRROR REFLECTING THE SQUALL THAT RISE IT AT EITHER CURB. SOMETHING IN THE MIRROR CATCHES YOUR EYE...

HIS BRIEFGCASE.

YOU TURN AROUND AND STARE AT THE SHINY NEW LEATHER BRIEFCASE YOUR CUSTOMER HAS LEFT ON THE BACK SEAT. THE GOLD INITIALS PULSATE IN THE LIGHT FROM THE STREET LAMP.

E.M., PH.D. / E.M., PH.D. / WHAT IS THERE ABOUT THOSE INITIALS?

THE NEWSPAPER ROLLED UP BESIDE YOU REMINDS YOU OF COURSE...

OF COURSE! E. M., EDBERT MULLER, THE NOTED MYTHOLOGIST, THE MAN WHO IS TRYING TO CONVINCING THE POLICE THAT THE MONSTROUS IS A VAMPIRE.

YOU PULL OUT YOUR PACK OF BUTTS, FISHING FOR ANOTHER CIGARETTE. THE PACK IS EMPTY. YOU CURSE. FAR DOWN THE BLOCK, AT THE CORNER, A DIM LIGHT FILTERS THROUGH A STORE WINDOW, SILHOUETTING THE LETTERS PAINTED ON IT.

BAR? THEY'D HAVE A CIGARETTE MACHINE.

YOU SWING FROM THE CAR AND START DOWN THE LONG DARK STREET. THE RAIN HAS STOPPED. A MUDDY STREAM OF WATER PUSHING HEADLONG AT THE CURBSIDE POURS DOWN INTO A FOUL-SMELLING SEWER, PULLING THE LAST TRACES OF RAIN WITH IT. UP ABOVE, THE CLOUDS ARE BREAKING UP... AND HERE AND THERE, A STAR BLINKS THROUGH A BLACK HOLE IN THE GREY COVER...

GONTO BE A MICE NIGHT AFTER ALL.

YOU'RE ALMOST TO THE CORNER WHEN THE LIGHTS IN THE BAR WINDOW DISAPPEAR AND BLACKNESS DESCENDS. THE SIGN IN THE DOOR LAUGHS AT YOU, AND THE LAUGH ACHORS OVER THE DARK STREETS AND OFF THE GRIMING FACES OF THE TENEMENTS.

CLOSED! BLAST IT...

CLOSED

THE LAUGH DIES. SILENCE CLOSES IN, THICK, BLACK, FRIGHTENING SILENCE. STRANGE. NO RADIO PLAYING? NO BABY CRYING? NO SOUND OF THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE BEHIND THE MUTE TENEMENT FACADES? JUST SILENCE...

NO WONDER? THESE TENEMENTS ARE ALL BOARDED UP. THEY'RE DESERTED.

THEN WHY THE HELL? WHAT BUSINESS COULD A BAR DO IN A CONDEMNED TENEMENT DISTRICT? YOU START BACK TOWARD YOUR CAB, AND THEN YOU HEAR THEM... AT FIRST YOU THINK THEY'RE SOUNDS OF YOUR OWN... BUT WHEN YOU STOP, THEY CONTINUE...

FOOTSTEPS. SOMEONE'S FOLLOWING ME.



YOU QUICKEN YOUR STEPS, THE CAB IS A MILLION MILES AWAY BEHIND YOU, THE FOOTSTEPS INCREASE THEIR TEMPO TOO... YOU BEGIN TO RUN...

THE CAB? I'LL NEVER REACH IT IN TIME.



THE OPEN HALLWAY YAWNS AT YOU. YOU DUCK IN, CRINGING IN THE SHADOWS. A FIGURE HURRIES BY... BLACK OVERCOAT... BLACK HAT...

HIM? MY CUSTOMER? MULLER.



YOU HEAR HIS FOOTSTEPS POUNDING UP THE BLOCK. IN YOUR CHEST, YOUR HEART IS POUNDING TOO, THEN THE FOOTSTEPS STOP... AND YOUR HEART SKIPS A BEAT...

HE'S COMING BACK!



YOU BACK OFF INTO THE BLOCK. THE FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. HE STANDS FRAMED IN THE HALLWAY ENTRANCE. HIS EYES BURNING LIKE TWO WHITE-HOT COALS.

YOU CAN'T ESCAPE, MY FRIEND? YOU'RE TRAPPED!



HIS EYES SEEM TO PIERCE THE DARKNESS, SEEM TO SEARCH YOU OUT OF THE SHADOWS. CAN HE SEE YOU THERE? CAN HIS EYES PENETRATE THE NIGHT-LIKE AIR?

LIKE A BAT'S? LIKE A VAMPIRE'S?



YOU SHRIEK. YOU OPEN YOUR QUIVERING LIPS AND YOU SHRIEK. AND YOU TURN AND RUN... DOWN THE LONG-BLACK CORRIDOR, STUMBLING, SETTING UP, RUNNING AGAIN...

IT'S NO USE! YOU'RE TRAPPED! I'VE CAUGHT YOU!

NO! NO!



THE CELLAR DOOR HANGS CRAZILY ON BROKEN RUSTED HINGES. STEPS LEAD DOWNWARD INTO BLACKNESS. YOU LEAVE THROUGH...



THE STEPS, ROTTED AND DECAYED, GIVE WAY BENEATH YOUR WEIGHT AND YOU PLUNGE INTO THE DARKNESS...



YOU STRUGGLE TO YOUR FEET, ABOVE YOU, YOUR CUSTOMER PEERS DOWN THROUGH THE CELLAR DOORWAY...



SUDDENLY THERE ARE STRANGE SOUNDS ABOUT YOU, CREAKING NOISES, AND DEEP SINGS... AND FLUTTERINGS IN THE DARK. THE CELLAR IS FILLED WITH LOW EVIL-LOOKING BOXES, NO, NOT BOXES AT ALL...



THE LIDS HAVE COME ALIVE NOW, SLIPPING FROM THE COFFINS, SWINGING UPWARD, FALLING BACK, GRUNT-FACED FIGURES, WITH SLANTED EYES AND FANGED MOUTHS OODING SPITTLE, RISE FROM THEIR DEPTHS...



THEY STUMBLE TOWARD YOU, SHRIEKING... LAUGHING... REACHING OUT...



AND THEN THEY ARE UPON YOU, THEIR FANGS RIPPING AND TEARING AT YOUR FLESH... THEIR DRY LIPS CLOSING OVER YOUR WOUNDS, DRAWING THE LIFE-FLUID THAT POURS RED FROM THEM...



THE SCREAM ECHOES AND RE-ECHOES IN YOUR EARS. YOU CLAW AT THE COLD LEATHER SEAT, AND YOU OPEN YOUR EYES...

HUNT WHAT... WHERE AM I?



THE RAIN CHATTERS ON YOUR CAB ROOF, PEOPLE POUR FROM THE SUBWAY EXIT, THE NEWSIE CHANTS AT THEM...

READ ALL ABOUT IT! ANOTHER BODY FOUND! ANOTHER MURDER! READ ALL ABOUT IT!



YOU'RE BACK AT THE KICK-START, BY THE SUBWAY EXIT, THE REALISTIC DREAMS UPON YOU...

I... I FELL ASLEEP. I'VE BEEN DREAMING!



YOU STARE DOWN AT THE OPEN PAPER ON YOUR LAR HIS NAME SEEMS TO RISE FROM THE BLOODS OF TYPE... MAGNIFIED... BLACK AND SHINING...

DR. ROBERT MULLER? WHY DID I DREAM ABOUT HIM? WHY?



AND THEN HE IS BESIDE YOU, HIS BLACK OVERCOAT PULLED UP, HIS BLACK HAT-BRIM TURNED DOWN, AND HIS EYES GLARING LIKE FIRE-LIGHTS

BUSH?

NO BREE? HOP IN? WHERE TO?



YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK AT THE INITIALS ON THE BRIDGE-CASE HE IS CARRYING. YOU KNOW WHO HE IS. HE MUTTERS THE STREET AND NUMBER AND GLIDES INTO THE BACK SEAT. YOU MESH GEARS AND PULL AWAY...

WHY DID I DREAM ABOUT HIM? AND THE VAMPIRES... ATTACKING ME? WHAT DID IT ALL MEAN?



SUDDENLY, YOU KNOW THE MEANING OF YOUR NIGHTMARE, AND YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST DO...

THIS ISN'T THE WAY...

IT'S A SHORT-CUT, DOCTOR MULLER...



YOU STOP THE CAR. IT'S ONE OF THE WORST NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CITY. THE NEIGHBORHOOD YOU DREAMED ABOUT.

YOU, YOU KNOW ME?

'YES, DOCTOR' GET OUT...



IT'S CLEAR NOW. THE WHOLE DREAM IS CLEAR. DR. ROBERT MULLER IS A THREAT TO YOU. THAT'S WHY YOU DREAMED OF HIM FOLLOWING YOU... TRACKING YOU DOWN...

MY... MY BRIEFCASE! I LEFT IT ON THE SEAT!

YOU WON'T NEED IT, DOC.



AND THE VAMPIRES... THE ONE THAT ATTACKED YOU IN THE CELLAR. DOCTOR MULLER KNOWS ABOUT VAMPIRES. ALL ABOUT THEM SOONER OR LATER HE'D CONVINCE THE POLICE.

WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME? THIS HALLWAY. IT'S SO DARK...

KEEP GOING!



IT WOULD BE HIS WISE KNOWLEDGE OF VAMPIRES THAT WOULD FINALLY MEAN YOUR ULTIMATE DEATH. THE DREAM MADE SENSE. THE DREAM WAS A WARNING.

WHO ARE YOU? WHO DO YOU SERVE?
NO! NO! MY GOD!

'YES, DOCTOR' YES...



HE STRUGGLES, BUT YOU ARE STRONG. YOU BEND AND BITE YOUR FANGS INTO HIS SOFT WHITE CERVICAL NECK... DRAWING IN THE THICK RED LIFE-FLUID THAT YOU MUST HAVE...



AND WHEN THE LAST DROP IS GONE, YOU FLING HIS LIFELESS BODY DOWN THE ROTTED CELLAR STEPS WITH THE OTHER ONLY THIRTEEN VICTIMS? HAH! WANT TELL THEY FIND THE REST DOWN THERE? AS DAWN BREAKS, YOU OPEN THE TRUNK OF YOUR CAR, CRAWL IN ONTO THE THIN LAYER OF SOIL AND YAWN...

IS... NO-HW... BETTER GET A GOOD DAY'S REST TODAY? IMAGINE... A VAMPIRE FALLING ASLEEP AT NIGHT? AND DREAMING, YET...



HEH, HEH, NOW SOME PEOPLE MIGHT ACCUSE ME OF SPINNING BLACK FABLES, BUT YOU WOULDN'T AGREE, WOULD YOU, RICHIE? THE ONLY THING I'M BUILT OF IS TRUTH AND YOUR IMAGINATION. ONCE IN A WHILE, WELL, I'VE GOT TO MEET FRIENDS, SO I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE WALT-KEEPER FOR AN OFFERING. WOULD THE FRIENDS YOU MET ON SOME SOONER I KNOW.

THEY SPOTTED HIM AS A HYCK WHEN HE CAME TO NEW YORK. SOLD HIM THE VAMPIRE STATE BELONGING. ISN'T THAT A BLOODY SHAME? 'WYE NOW. DID YOU EVER HEAR OF HIM LATER?



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELTER VENTURE INTO THE VAULT, VULTURES. THIS IS YOUR HOOP IN HOWLS, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO NARRATE ANOTHER HAUNTING NOVELLETTE FROM MY GRENLY COLLECTION. SO COME IN, SIT DOWN ON THAT FILE OF SHOE-BOXES THERE, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLING TALE I CALL...

CURIOSITY KILLED...



THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT, HE'S RIGHT OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM DOOR. SOONER OR LATER HE'LL GET IT OPEN AND I'LL... I'LL BE MURDERED, I'M SCRAMBLING THIS DOWN AS FAST AS I CAN SO YOU'LL KNOW THE WHOLE STORY, MY NAME IS HENRIETTA CLAYTON I LIVE IN THE MORAL ARMS APARTMENT HOTEL, IT ALL STARTED THE MORNING I WENT DOWN THE HALL TO VISIT MY FRIEND, EMILY DUNHAM.

VERY OK, IT'S FINE, MRS. CLAYTON.

IS EMILY AT HOME, MR. OSWALD? I, UM, WANTED TO GET A RECIPE.



FIRST LET ME SAY THAT, EVER SINCE I'D KNOWN HIM, WALLACE DURAND HAD ALWAYS BEEN SHY, QUIET, AND COMPLETELY DOMINATED BY HIS WIFE, EMILY. THAT MORNING, HE SEEMED LIKE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PERSON. HE BRANNED AT ME...

EMILY'S GONE, MRS. CLAYTON SHE'S TAKEN A TRIP... TO THE COAST... TO VISIT RELATIVES.

OH? SHE DIDN'T MENTION IT!



WALLACE DURAND STOOD STRAIGHT, LOOKING AT ME DEFIANTLY. HE SEEMED TALLER SOMETIME... TALLER THAN HE'D EVER BEEN... LIKE HEAVY WEIGHTS HAD BEEN DROPPED FROM HIS THICK SHOULDERS...

IT WAS SUDDEN, MRS. CLAYTON. SHE LEFT LAST NIGHT, AND NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

Y-YES, MR. DURAND? I'M SORRY I DISTURBED YOU...



HE BLANNED THE DOOR... BLANNED IT, MIND YOU! MR. DURAND... THE MIDDLE-TOAST... THE FEAKING... BLANNED THE DOOR IN MY FACE, I STOOD THERE SHOOKED! I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT...

EMILY'S GONE AWAY BEFORE, BUT WALLACE DURAND HAD NEVER BEHAVED THAT WAY WHILE SHE'S BEEN GONE. IT WAS AS IF HE KNOW SHE WASN'T COMING BACK...

I RANG FOR THE ELEVATOR. A COLD SHIVER RAN UP MY SPINE. I GLANCED AT MY WATCH, 8:40 STILL TIME...

WHAT... WHAT'S COME OVER HIM? HE'S LIKE A DIFFERENT MAN! HE'S NEVER ACTED LIKE THAT!

SOMETHING'S WRONG, I FEEL IT IN MY BONES! HE'S... HE'S DONE SOMETHING TO EMILY...



SINCE NINE P.M., WASN'T ANYTHING WRONG?

DID YOU TAKE MRS. DURAND DOWN LAST NIGHT, GEORGE? EMILY DURAND? SHE WOULD HAVE HAD A SUITCASE...

NO, WAH? I BROUGHT YOU AND MRS. DURAND UP AT TEN P.M. LAST NIGHT, REMEMBER? THAT'S THE LAST I SAW OF HER, DIDN'T TAKE HER DOWN LAST NIGHT AT ALL!

I SEE? ER... SUPPOSE SHE WALKED DOWN, GEORGE? WHO'D SHE SEE NEXT?



WALKED DOWN, MRS. SLAYTON? FOURTEEN FLOORS? I HARDLY THINK SHE'D *WALK* DOWN. BESIDES, IF SHE DID, JED WOULD HAVE SEEN HER. HE WAS AT THE DESK ALL NIGHT. WORKIN' THE SWITCHBOARD.

ASK HIM FOR ME, WILL YOU, GEORGE? ASK JED IF HE SAW MRS. OR MR. DURAND LAST NIGHT!

GEORGE NODDED. THE ELEVATOR DOOR SLID CLOSED, AND IT WHIRRED AWAY. I WATCHED THE HAND ABOVE SWING SLOWLY AROUND TOWARDS ONE. I WENT BACK TO MY OWN APARTMENT. MILTON WAS GETTING INTO HIS COAT. MILTON IS MY HUSBAND.

WELL, HENRIETTA. MILTON? HE'S GOOD-BYE! I'M OFF... *KILLED HER!*

HUH? WHO? MR. DURAND? HE'S KILLED EMILY? I KNOW IT!



MILTON LOOKED AT ME AND BEGAN TO GIGGLE...

WALLY? KILL EMILY? DON'T BE SILLY! HE... HE WOULDN'T HAVE THE NERVE! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SO?

HE'S ACTING SO STRANGELY, SO JEDD. HE SAID EMILY WENT ON A TRIP. BUT I REMEMBER, SHE HADN'T LEFT THIS BUILDING SINCE WE CAME HOME FROM THE WOMEN'S SOCIAL LAST NIGHT.



I HEARD THE ELEVATOR DOOR OUTSIDE SLIDE OPEN. I PEERED OUT, GEORGE WAS COMING TOWARD MY APARTMENT.

WELL, GEORGE? WHAT DID JED SAY?

HE SAID *NOBODY* CAME DOWN THOSE STAIRS LAST NIGHT, MA'AM. *BUT NOBODY...*



I THANKED GEORGE AND HE SHUFFLED OFF. I TURNED TO MILTON... THEN SHE'S STILL IN THERE, MILTON? POOR EMILY... LYIN' DEAD IN THAT APARTMENT.

DON'T YOU THINK THAT IF WALLY DID MURDER EMILY, HE'D HAVE GOTTEN RID OF HER BODY, HENRIETTA?



NOW, MILTON? THAT'S JUST IT! HOW? HE COULDN'T CARRY HER BODY DOWN FOURTEEN FLOORS! BESIDES, JED SAID NOBODY CAME DOWN THE STAIRS LAST NIGHT. HE COULDN'T TAKE HER DOWN IN THE ELEVATOR AND THE FIRE ESCAPE WOULD BE TOO RISKY. NO? SHE'S STILL IN THERE!

WELL, I'M LATE. I'VE GOT TO GO TO THE OFFICE. LOOK, HENRIETTA. IF YOU'RE SO SURE, WHY DON'T YOU CALL THE POLICE?



MILTON LEFT AND I HEARD THE ELEVATOR COME AND TAKE HIM DOWN. I WENT TO THE PHONE. I PICKED UP THE RECEIVER. I HESITATED...

I I CAN'T CALL THE POLICE. I HAVE NO PROOF. I'VE GOT TO HAVE PROOF.



I PUT DOWN THE PHONE AND WENT TO THE KITCHEN. I TOOK A MEASURING CUP FROM THE CUPBOARD AND WENT DOWN THE HALL TO THE DURAND APARTMENT. I KNOCKED. I HEARD FOOTSTEPS MOVING AROUND INSIDE, AND WALLACE DURAND OPENED THE DOOR...

OH, IT'S YOU AGAIN, *NOT* WHAT?

COULD I BORROW A CUP OF SUGAR, MR. DURAND? I'M A LITTLE SHORT.



I STARTED IN BUT MR. DURAND BLOCKED MY WAY. HE LIFTED THE CUP FROM MY HAND.

I'LL GET IT FOR YOU, MRS. CLAYTON.

OH, THANKS.



HE CLOSED THE DOOR AND LOCKED IT. HE WOULDN'T LET ME IN. HE WAS *HOODING* SOMETHING, ALL RIGHT. EMILY WAS IN THERE? POOR EMILY.

HERE YOU ARE?

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, MR. DURAND.



HE SLAMMED THE DOOR. I WAS ALONE IN THE HALL. I WENT BACK TO MY APARTMENT, MY HAND SHOOK...

ALL RIGHT, WALLACE DURAND! ALL RIGHT! I'LL GET THE PROOF, YOU'LL SEE...



I PULLED A CHAIR UP TO THE APARTMENT DOOR AND SAT DOWN. I OPENED IT A CRACK SO I COULD WATCH THE DURAND'S DOOR. I WAITED. AFTER AN HOUR, MR. DURAND CAME OUT... LOCKED THE DOOR CAREFULLY... AND PRESSED THE ELEVATOR BELL.



WHEN HE WAS GONE, I DARTED ACROSS THE LIVING ROOM AND OUT THE FRENCH DOORS. THE DURANDS AND WE SHARED A TERRACE. I CROSSED THE LOW DIVIDING WALL AND PEERED INTO THEIR APARTMENT THE BUNGLE WOULD SPRING. I COULDN'T SEE. THE DOOR WAS LOCKED...

I WON'T GIVE UP, I WON'T. HE'S GOING TO HAVE TO TRY TO GET RID OF MY BODY, AND WHEN HE DOES...



ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER, WALLACE DURAND CAME BACK. HE CARRIED A SMALL CARTON ABOUT THE SIZE OF A SHOE-BOX...



HE LET HIMSELF INTO HIS APARTMENT, AND I HEARD HIM LOCK IT FROM THE INSIDE. I TOOK THE CUP OF SUGAR AND WENT DOWN THE HALL AND KNOCKED...



HE SEEMED ANNOYED. HE SMATCHED THE SUGAR, LOCKED THE DOOR, AND RETURNED WITH THE EMPTY GLASS...



HE SLAMMED THE DOOR IN MY FACE...



HE WAS HIDING SOMETHING ALL RIGHT. IT WAS OBVIOUS. I WAS DETERMINED TO PROVE HIS HORRIFICOUS DEED. SO I WATCHED EVERY DAY. HE WENT OUT IN THE MORNING **EMPTY-HANDED**...



AND EVERY DAY HE CAME BACK WITH ANOTHER SHOE-BOX...



FINALLY AFTER TWO MONTHS OF THIS... GOING OUT **EMPTY-HANDED** AND COMING BACK TWO HOURS LATER WITH THE INVARIABLE **SHOE BOX**, I ACCUSED HIM ONE DAY...



I THOUGHT MY EARS WERE DECEIVING ME. I HEARD IT PLAIN AS DAY, A SCRATCHING SOUND INSIDE THE BOX HE WAS CARRYING...

"N-NEVER, MR. DURAND?" EMILY'S LEFT ME FOR GOOD? NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND...



HE WENT INSIDE. I WENT BACK TO MY APARTMENT. I TRIED TO THINK. WHAT DID HE HAVE IN THAT BOX? WAS EMILY'S BODY STILL IN THAT APARTMENT, OR HAD WALLACE DURAND MANAGED TO GET RID OF IT? AND THEN, THAT NIGHT, AS I RODE THE LIVING ROOM FLOOR...



WHAT'S THAT?

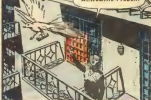
THERE WAS A FLAPPING SOUND OUT ON THE TERRACE. I TIPTOED TO THE FRENCH DOOR. WALLACE DURAND WAS OUT THERE... AND HE HAD SOMETHING IN HIS OUTSTRETCHED HANDS...

A. A. PIGEON!



MR. DURAND CHECKED THE SMALL CAN STRAPPED TO THE PIGEON'S LEG. THEN HE TOSSED THE BIRD INTO THE AIR AND WATCHED IT FLY OFF INTO THE NIGHT...

A... NOTHING PIGEON!



I WORE UP MILTON. I TOLD HIM WHAT I'D SEEN...

SO WHAT? WHAT IN BLAZES WAS ONE THING TO DO WITH THE OTHER?

DON'T YOU SEE, MILTON? HE'S BEEN GETTING RID OF EMILY'S REMAINS THAT WAS A LITTLE BIT AT A TIME... IN THAT CAN STRAPPED TO THE PIGEON'S LEG...



GOOD LORD. IT WOULD TAKE MONTHS!

I'M GOING TO CALL THE POLICE.



HOW WOULD YOU WANT TO BE SURE? WHY DON'T YOU FOLLOW HIM TOMORROW MORNING? FIND OUT WHERE HE SETS THOSE BIRDS?



AND THEN I'LL SEE WHAT HE DOES WITH THE CONTENTS OF THE CAN.

THAT'LL BE THE PROOF YOU NEED!

YES, YES...



I TOOK MILTON'S ADVICE... AND THE NEXT DAY, I FOLLOWED WALLACE DURAND WHEN HE LEFT THE ROYAL ARMS APARTMENT HOTEL. HE TOOK A SUBWAY OUT OF THE CITY TO THE END OF THE LINE, THEN A BUS. I FOLLOWED THE BUS IN A TAXI...

HE'S GETTING OFF ALL RIGHT, DRIVER. I'LL GET OUT HERE...



MR. DURAND WENT TO THE REAR OF A RUNDOWN SHACK. I COULD HEAR THE LOUD BARKING OF DOGS...

SO THAT'S IT...



IT WAS ALL SO CLEAR. I WATCHED MINUTELY THE CAR FROM THE HORROR FLOOR THAT HAD ARRIVED THAT NIGHT AND EMPTY THE CONTENTS INTO THE KENNEL FULL OF SLAB-BERINE HUNGRY GUARDS...



THEN HE TOOK ANOTHER PIECE FROM THE COUP, PLACED IT IN A SHOE-BOX AND WENT AWAY. I WAITED UNTIL HE WAS GONE BEFORE I CAME OUT OF MY HIDE-PLACE. I FELT SICK... NAUSEOUS. POOR EMILY! WHEN I FINALLY GOT BACK TO MY APARTMENT...

MILTON YOU'RE HOME EARLY?

YES, EMILY! COME IN! I'VE BEEN WAITING!



MILTON LOOKED STRANGE. HE HAD A WILD GLEAM IN HIS USUALLY SAD EYES. EMILY AND I HAD BEEN ATTRACTED TO EACH OTHER BECAUSE WE WERE SO MUCH ALIKE... DOMINATING WIVES WHO LORED OVER SHY, QUIET, MILDHEARTED HUSBANDS...

MILTON! WHAT... WHAT'S THAT YOU HAVE THERE?

A SHOE-BOX, EMILY...



I HEARD THE UNMISTAKABLE COOING OF A PIGEON...

I SCREAMED AND RUSHED FOR THE BED-ROOM. I LOOKED MYSELF IN. I WAS TRAPPED. MILTON DISBOLED... HIS VOICE DRIFTING THROUGH THE DOOR...

WE PLANNED IT THIS WAY, HENRIETTA! FIRST WALLY, THEN WE'VE RENTED THE SHACK, THE DOGS, THE PIGEONS... BUT YOU FOUND OUT... TOO SOON...



THE DOOR IS OPENING. I'LL HAVE TO STOP WRITING... SO NOW, EVEN THOUGH WALLY ISN'T THROUGH GETTING RID OF EMILY'S BOOT... I'LL HAVE TO START HENRIETTA... START BY KILLING YOU... THEN CUTTING YOU UP INTO TINY LITTLE PIECES... BIG ENOUGH TO FIT IN CANS...



HE'S COMING TOWARD ME. HE'S

AT THIS POINT OUR MANUSCRIPT ENDS, KIDDIES... ENDS IN A BLOODY SWEAR! HENRIETTA IS NOW... FOR THE BLOOD! NOW DID I GET HOLD OF THIS LITTLE YARN, YOU ASK? SO WHO DO YOU THINK OWNED THE SHACK, THE DOGS... THE PIGEONS?

THAT WAS THE DEAL! WALLY AND MILTON GOT THE USE OF THEM FOR THE STORY RIGHTS, NEENER. NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THE SHIRT-KEEPER. SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, 'THE KING OF HORROR'! TILL THEN, COOOO!



**WE AT E.C. ARE PROUDEST
OF OUR SCIENCE - FICTION
MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...**



**LOOK FOR
THESE SEALS
WHEN YOU BUY!**

**THEY ARE YOUR ASSURANCE OF TOP
ENTERTAINMENT...FOUND ONLY ON
THE FOLLOWING E.C. MAGAZINES:**

**TALES FROM THE CRYPT
HAUNT OF FEAR - VAULT OF HORROR**

**SHOCK SUSPENSORIES
CRIME SUSPENSORIES**

**TWO-FISTED TALES - FRONTLINE COMBAT
MAD**

WEIRD SCIENCE - WEIRD FANTASY

AND THE 25¢ ANNUAL ANTHOLOGIES:

WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY

TWO-FISTED ANNUAL - TALES OF TERROR

**TIGHT
SQUEEZE!**

Not ten seconds after Kendall had seized the payroll bag and started toward the factory exit, he knew he was being pursued. He could hear their feet clattering along the concrete walk behind him, then a shot screamed along the corridor and ricocheted off the wall not five feet from his head. They were armed . . . and they meant business. And from the sound their shoes were making, there were at least three guards tracking him.

Almost in panic, Kendall clawed at his coat pocket and fumbled his gun free as he ran. It was the three guards against him . . . their lives against his own, he thought as he fled. They had him badly outnumbered . . . there wasn't much chance for him to escape . . .

Then he saw the steel staircase spiraling up far overhead to the catwalk which ran the length of the factory. This might help him squeeze out of the trap, Kendall thought, as he raced frenziedly up the steps. In another moment he was scampering along the catwalk and could hear them pounding up the steps after him. In a second they'd have him cornered; if he turned to fight, their bullets would cut him down in the first exchange of hot lead. And if he surrendered, it meant conviction for the fourth time . . . imprisonment for the rest of his life!

He stopped momentarily, amazement on his face. There, just a short

jump below, was a small area surrounded by steel walls. If he could just reach that haven, he'd be able to shoot at the guards as they came after him along the catwalk. And their own shots would be shrugged aside by those gleaming metal plates!

The jump jarred him more than he had expected: it was a half-minute before he recovered his balance and turned back to face the oncoming guards. The first of them reared up above him, leveled his gun. But he never pulled the trigger, because a bullet from below sent him reeling backwards.

Kendall crouched lower behind the steel walls . . . heard the guards' bullets ploughing into the plates with a shrill whine, then bounce harmlessly aside. He was safe, Kendall grinned to himself. At least for the moment. They couldn't get him with their guns . . . and if the two remaining guards gave him even the slightest target, he'd shoot to kill! Just one shot at each of the guards . . . that was all Kendall wanted . . .

A whirring sound made him pause in fear. He must be seeing things, he thought . . . but no! The steel plates that sheltered him . . . they were grinding toward one another, moving together ominously! He leaped to his feet and began to scream out his surrender, but it was too late! The walls could not be stopped . . . already they were pressing against him on each side. Already they were crushing his chest and legs . . . squeezing the breath out of his tortured lungs . . . mashing him into a bloody shadow on the sides of the huge steel vise he had heedlessly plunged into!



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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heh, heh! Guess all you EVANS fans can stop howling now! Gruesome George's biography and pictures, as you probably noticed, and if you haven't, why not?, is on the inside front cover of this miserable mag. And now YOU can stop howling TOO, George! Ya Gads, these editorial artists! Glory . . . glory . . . all they want is lute and fustate! Now take ME! All I want is FORTUNE . . . and all I get is FANGUIS! (IN-Jenour would be a BETTER word, C.K. old boy/adviser) I don't see them handing YOU TWO any lute wreaths, you moon-bungy perverts! (Mduy? What's "mooey," AD Diana, Sil. Sound familiar, has there ever an't been none of that stuff 'round HERE in some time?—ed) Ah, you poor, poor boys! Isn't it a joy? You'll have to drive your LAST YEAR'S Cadillac for a while yet! (But C.K.' The ASH-TRAYS are FULL!—ed) Radio-baits, I presume! (O) course . . . and KING-SIZE, too!—ed) Oh, DIG those CRA-ZY good-readers! And now for the mail!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

We are three intellectual college ghosts who spend our evenings reading your degenerate literature. The protagonists in your most horrible stories remind us of some of our long-lost dates. (Now we know what happened to them!) Due to our advanced education, we are properly equipped to fully appreciate your subtlety and sarcasm. Please print this or we boycott! Disrespectfully yours,

Slimy Syd
Mummified Myra
Fast Flava Jovce

PROTAGONISTS? Man! DIG those CRA-ZY co-ed!

Dear Fast Flava,

All of your stories turned everyone in the house a lovely shade of green. My Aunt Mawzee was eating when she read your book, and she's been in the refrigerator in comed word, so don't throw it up to me! for the past week I personally thank you must be crazy, but then aren't we all?

Edwina Zornich
Sawdust, Ohio

CRA-ZY, man! That's what I up! DIG them CHARTELUSE Ohioans!

Most Beloved Crypt-Keeper,

I'm a steady fan of yours, and enjoy all of the EC mags very much! Here are a few additional titles for your "horror hot parade":

LADY OF PAIN! (I will give you!)
GONE SQUISHIN'
FLL DISMEMBER APRIL!
CAN'T HELP LOATHING THAT CLAN
OF NINE

Ralph Chapman
Anchorage, Alak.

THE WHITE STUFF OF DOVER
ALL OF ME . . . WHY NOT EAT ALL
OF ME . . .
I'M PURIN' OVER MY DEAD DOG
ROVER

Dick Daggan
Delaware, Iowa

MAN! That dog is REAL GONE!

.. How about that?
JUMBLEDEYBALLS
THE BLOODIEST BITS OF THE EAR
I WANT A GHOUL JUST LIKE THE
GHOUL THAT BURIED DEAR OLD
DAD

Mama (Ma) Miller
Chicago, Ill

DIG that CRA-ZY barbershop!

.. How do you like:
OLD MACDONALD WAS ENGRAINED
WHEN YOU AND I WERE HUNG,
M'GIGGIE!

Dave Gordon and
Dick Mervo
Brookline, Mass.

DIG that . . . (Hey C.K.) Ditch the hat . . . here
comes COPS in a SQUAD CAR . . . down '90 mph!
—ed)

(ZOOOOOONNNNN!)
(O K, C.K./They're gone!—ed.)
MAN? I thought they'd NEVER leave!

Dear C.K.,

The story by Ray Bradbury, "There Was an Old Woman," (T.C. No. 34) was tops! I read the original, but Ingels did it more than justice with his fine illustrations!

Warren A. Feilberg
Chicago, Ill

.. I love your mag, but I think that Ray Bradbury's
story . . . stunk! What happened?

Ed Redling
Paterson, N. J

Well, we can't please EVERYBODY! Anyway, Mr. FREIBERG will be happy to find EC's adaptation of Mr. B's "The Handler" . . . also illustrated by Ghastly Ghaflin Ingels! . . . in the wind-up spot of that issue. Before closing, a couple of "it's-gonna-cost-you-money-if-a-ya-notice-enough-to-see" announcements. A limited number (seven hundred fifty-two thousand one hundred and sixty-nine) of copies of the 3rd annual TALES OF TERROR, EC's anthology of horror and Suspense, are now clattering up the office. Help us unload 'em! 25¢ Also . . . subscriptions to any EC mag

71c 6 issues! Address for either or both of the above, mail, poetry, books, letters, or 1953 Cadillac license

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 106, Dept. 36
223 Lafayette St.
N. Y. C. 12, N. Y.

DKs that CRA-ZY webbing!

here're some more

HERE'S A TERROR-TALE OF
SPORTING LIFE! I CALL IT...

HOW GREEN WAS MY ALLEY



HIS JOB AS A TRAVELING SALESMAN HAD ENABLED ROBERT TO KEEP UP THE DECEPTION FOR THREE EXCITING YEARS. IT HAD BEEN SO SIMPLE TO CARRY ON HIS DOUBLE LIFE, SPENDING A WEEK WITH ANNE, A WEEK WITH JEAN, AND TWO WEEKS ON THE ROAD. YES, ROBERT SMITH WAS A MIGHTY...

MUST YOU GO, BOB? YOU KNOW HOW I MISS YOU WHEN YOU'RE AWAY.

NOT TO EARN A LIVING, ANNE. MONEY WILL, GOOD-BYE, SEE YOU IN A MONTH.



ROBERT LOOKED DOWN AT SLIM, DARK-HAIRED ANNE. SHE DRINKED SLEEPILY IN THE BED, REACHING TOWARD HIM.

KISS ME GOOD-BYE AND WITH ME LUCK. THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S AMATEUR ATHLETIC TOURNAMENTS ARE TWO WEEKS OFF...

SAY? I ALMOST FORGOT YOUR GOLF TOURNAMENT. I DROUGHT YOU SOME THING.



ROBERT WENT OUT TO THE CAR. HE UNLATCHED THE TRUNK. INSIDE WERE TWO CAREFULLY WRAPPED PACKAGES. HE CHOSE ONE AND BROUGHT IT BACK INTO THE HOUSE TO THE BEDROOM...



HERE, HONEY! FOR ME, FOR LUCK! FOR ME, BOB? HOW SWEET! WHAT IS IT?



ROBERT PUT OUT HIS HAND... **HAVE DON'T OPEN IT NOW! NOT UNTIL YOU GET TO YOURSELF FOURMOUNTAIN! IT'S A SURPRISE! IT MAY HELP YOU WIN...** YOU'RE SO THOUGHTFUL! FOL, DAFUM!

AMY PUT DOWN THE PACKAGE AND SLIPPED HER ARMS AROUND ROBERT'S NECK...



I REALLY HAVE TO GET GOING, HONEY. IT'S LATE EVENING... **BEAST! HOW CAN BUSINESS BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN... PLEASURE?**

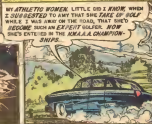
ROBERT SLIPPED AWAY FROM AMY AND PICKED UP HIS BAGS. SHE FOLLOWED HIM TO THE DOOR...



YOU'LL COME DOWN AND SEE ME PLAY, BOB? TWO WEEKS FROM TOMORROW... AT THE N.R.A.A. COURSE IN SPRING DALE. I'LL BE AT THE HOTEL! I'VE RESERVED A DOUBLE ROOM!

OF COURSE, HONEY! YOU KNOW I WOULDN'T MISS MY WIFE'S CAPTURING THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL AMATEUR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP!

BOB CHUCKLED AS HE DROVE OFF...



MY ATHLETIC WOMEN. LITTLE DID I KNOW, WHEN I SUGGESTED TO AMY THAT SHE TAKE UP GOLF WHILE I WAS AWAY ON THE ROAD, THAT SHE'D BECOME SUCH AN EXPERT GOLFER. NOW SHE'S ENTERED IN THE N.R.A.A. CHAMPIONSHIPS.

THE CAR ROARED NORTH THROUGH SMALL TOWNS AND OVER MILES OF HIGHWAYS UNTIL, THE NEXT NIGHT...



HOR, HONEY! I THOUGHT YOU'D BE BACK TONIGHT! I CAME HOME FROM PRACTICE EARLY...

JEAN, BABY?

SHE THROSE HER BOOK TO THE FLOOR AND HE WAS IN HER ARMS. JEAN WAS HEAVIER THAN ANY MORE MUSCULAR. HER HAIR FELL IN SOFT GOLDEN TRESSSES ABOUT HER BARE SHOULDERS...



OH, DARLING! I MISSED YOU! I MISSED YOU!

AND I MISSED YOU, JEAN. I DON'T LIKE THE ONE-FEET-A-MONTH DEAL ANY MORE THAN YOU! GO...

HEY, HEY! WELL, BODDS, THAT'S THE PICTURE. LOVER NOT COMMITTED BETWEEN RIVALS. ONE WEEK WITH SLIM, SWEET ANY - ONE WEEK WITH BUCKO JEAN FOR THREE YEARS, THIS LITTLE BASKET HAD BEEN GOING ON ANY TOOK UP SELF WHILE ROBERT DARLING WAS ON THE ROAD. KNOW WHAT JEAN TOOK UP? READ ON...



THE WEEK WAS OVER. JEAN AND BOB WERE SAYING GOOD-BYE...

WHAT IS IT, BOB? DON'T OPEN A SURPRISE... IF JEAN YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT A TOURNAMENT LAST MONTH WHEN I WAS HOME...



YES THE W.R.A.A. BOWLING TOURNAMENT, IT'S NEXT WEEK. I'VE QUALIFIED... WELL, AFTER YOU GET THERE, THEN OPEN IT MATTER. IT'LL HELP YOU WIN.



YES, JEAN HAD TAKEN UP BOWLING. ROBERT HAD SUGGESTED IT, AND LIKE ANY JEAN HAD PROVEN HERSELF VERY ADEPT AT HER CHOSEN SPORT...

JUST THINK? MY WIFE YOU WILL COME DOWN AND A CHAMPION BOWLER. SEE ME BOWL NEXT WEEK, WON'T YOU, HONEY?



OF COURSE, JEAN. WHERE'D YOU SAY IT WAS? SPINDALE? THE W.R.A.A.'S ALLEYS THERE.



SPINDALE? BUT... BUT I THOUGHT THERE WAS A GOLF COURSE THERE.



THERE IS, AND TENNIS COURTS, AND A POOL. THE W.R.A.A. HOLDS ALL ITS TOURNAMENTS THERE. YOU WILL COME, WON'T YOU? I HAVE A RESERVATION FOR A DOUBLE ROOM...

WELL, I'LL... I'LL TRY TO MAKE IT, HONEY. AT LEAST I'LL STOP BY YOUR HOTEL TO WISH YOU LUCK!

OH, DARLING. I'LL MAKE YOU SO PROUD OF ME NOW... KISS ME GOOD-NIGHT.



BOB SPEED OFF... HEH, HEH, SO **BOTH** MY ATHLETIC WOMEN WILL BE IN THE SAME TOWN AT THE SAME TIME, WELL... **THIS** GUGHT TO BE FUN. I'M LUCKY THAT **SMITH** IS A COMMON NAME. ANY AND JEAN WILL NEVER **SUSPECT** ANYTHING, AND IF I **WORN** IT RIGHT... NO ONE WILL BE THE **WISER**.



HEH, HEH, **SPRINGDALE** PROBABLY HAS ONLY **ONE** HOTEL. THEY'LL **BOTH** BE **THERE**. YES, BUT **THIS** IS GOING TO BE **FUN!**



BUT THEN, HAVEN'T THE LAST THREE YEARS?



SPRINGDALE'S ONE HOTEL WAS A BUSTLE OF EXCITEMENT ON THE FIRST DAY OF TOURNAMENT WEEK. THE LOBBY WAS JAMMED...

SORRY, NO ROOMS. YOU HAVE A **RESERVATION** FOR ME... **WATSON** FOR ME... **MRS. ROBERT SMITH**... **MRS. ROBERT SMITH**? **SMITH** CHECKED IN THIS MORNING?



BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. I'M **MRS. ROBERT SMITH**. HERE'S YOUR LETTER ACKNOWLEDGING MY **RESERVATION**...

OH, DEAR. THERE'S BEEN A **MISTAKE**. OBVIOUSLY THERE ARE **TWO** **MRS. ROBERT SMITHS**. I SEE **YOU'RE** FROM **GENTON CITY**? THE ONE THAT **RESERVED** THIS MORNING IS FROM **LAKEVIEW**.



LAKEVIEW? DID I HEAR SOMEONE MENTION **LAKEVIEW**? THAT'S MY...

OH, **MRS. SMITH**, I'M **SO** GLAD YOU'RE **HERE**. THERE'S BEEN A **TER-RIBLE** ERROR. LET ME **INTRODUCE** YOU TO **MRS. ROBERT SMITH**.

SEEMS WE HAVE **THE SAME NAME**, HONEY. **AND** THE SAME **ROOM** **RESERVATION**...

LADIES! I HAVE A **BRIGHT** IDEA! **WHY** DON'T YOU **TWO** **SHARE** THE **ROOM**? I SEE THAT IT'S A **DOUBLE**...

WELL, MY **HUSBAND** IS **COMING** DOWN TO **SEE** ME **FLAY**...

SO'S MINE, BUT WE **COULD** **DOUBLE** UP **UNTIL** THEY **STRAIGHTEN** THIS **MESS** OUT...



OH, YES! WE'LL
FIX THINGS UP
THIS IS ALL
OUR FAULT.

O'GOD,
HONESTLY
HANK'S
AMY!
WHAT'S
YOURS?

JERRY
I
BOYLE...

I PLAY GOLF
ER... BOY?
TAKE THESE
BAGS TO
ROOM 204.

ISN'T IT A COIN-
CIDENCE... I MEAN
US HAVING THE
SAME MARRIED
NAME!

WELL, HONEY...
ROBERT SMITH
IS AN awfully
COMMON NAME!
IN HERE...

I GUESS SO.
MY BOB IS
A TRAVELING
SALESMAN...



HE IS? SO'S MINE? I
HARDLY SEE HIM! ONLY
ONE WEEK A MONTH!

HERE, BOY! THANKS.
DID YOU SAY ONE WEEK
A MONTH? THAT'S
OUR ARRANGEMENT,
TOO!

I GUESS ALL TRAVELING
SALESMEN'S WIVES HAVE IT
AROUND. THAT'S WHY I
TOOK UP GOLF.

SAME HERE... WITH
MY BOWLING. IT GAVE
ME SOMETHING TO DO!
OH, I FORGOT...



MY HUSBAND GAVE ME THIS
PACKAGE. IT'S A SUR-
PRISE. I WAS SUPPOSED
TO OPEN IT WHEN I
GOT HOME...

THAT'S FUNNY! I
HAVE ONE, TOO! HERE!
SEE?

THE TWO GIRLS STRUGGLED WITH THEIR PACKAGES...
TEARING THEM OPEN HEROICALLY...

WHAT THE...?

GOOD LORD!



AMY STARED AT THE SHOES WITH THE ONE RUBBER SOLE AND THE ONE LEATHER ONE...

THESE THESE ARE **BOWLING SHOES...**



JEAN STARED AT HER GIFT... SHOES WITH METAL CLEATS...

AND... THESE ARE **BOLF SHOES.**



THEN IT DAWNED UPON THEM. THEY LODGED AT EACH OTHER...

BUT... BUT **I PLAY GOLF!** AND I... **BOW!**



IN SILENCE THEY EACH RUMMAGED THROUGH THEIR SUITCASES, TOSING CLOTHES ASIDE.



AND WHEN THEY EACH FOUND WHAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR, THEY HELD THE TWO PHOTOGRAPHS UP... COMPARING THEM...



SO THEY WAITED FOR ROBERT TOGETHER...

WHAT THE... **HELLO, COME IN OUR HUSBAND!**



THE NEXT MORNING, WHEN THE TOURNAMENT STARTED, THE JUDGES FOUND AMY ON THE FIRST GREEN OF THE GOLF COURSE, HER HAIR STRINGY, HER FACE PALE, SLEEPFULLY PRACTICING HER PUTTING...



AMY WAS USING ROBERT'S EYEBALLS...

AND THEY FOUND JEAN AT THE ALLEYS WHICH THEY CAME TO OPEN THEM UP, SHE WAS PRACTICING HER BOWLING...



JEAN WAS USING ROBERT'S EYELESS HEAD.

HEH, HEH! AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY DIDDIES IS DON'T BE A **MADAME** AND **SPOON** WITH A **SHAKE** WIFE OR YOU'LL **STINK OUT IN THE LAST FRAME**. AND HOBBY WILL TELL FOW, BECAUSE **ONE WIFE IS PAIR** FOR THE **COURSE** SO IF YOU FEEL LIKE **FINNING** YOURSELF DOWN, DON'T **SPLIT** YOUR AFFECTION. **ONE BAR IS ENOUGH FOR ANY DUFFER!**

HEH, HEH! AND NOW, THE **OLD BITCH** WANTS TO WIND UP MY TERROR-BAG. 'BYE, NOW. REMEMBER **OLD SQUEE'S** NEVER DIE.



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HELLO, HELLO, IT'S YOUR *DIVISION OF DISBURSING DRAMA*. THE OLD WITCH, READY TO *STIR UP* ANOTHER *STENCH-SMACK* IN MY CAULDRON HERE IN *THE MOUNT OF FEAR*, TO COME IN, KIDNAP, AND SET DOWN BY THE *FIRE*. THIS TIME, MY *MENUS* CONSISTS OF ANOTHER ADAPTION OF A TALE BY MY BOSS, *BRADBURY*. *REVOLTING RAY*, AS I AFFECTIONATELY CALL HIM. LISTEN TO *RAY BRADBURY'S* SUPERS...

THE HANDLER

MR. BENEDICT WALKED DOWN THE STEPS AND OUT THE GATE, WITHOUT ONCE LOOKING AT HIS LITTLE MORTUARY BUILDING. HE SAID THAT PLEASURE FOR LATER IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THINGS TOOK THE RIGHT PRECEDENCE, IT WOULDN'T PAY TO THINK WITH JOY OF THE BODIES AWAITING HIS TALENTS IN THE MORTUARY BUILDING, NO, IT WAS BETTER TO FOLLOW HIS USUAL DAY AFTER DAY ROUTINE. HE WOULD LET THE CONFLICT BEGIN...



MR. BENEDICT KNEW JUST WHO TO GET HIMSELF ENRAGED. HE SPoke WITH MR. RODGERS, THE DRUG GUY, AND HE SAID AND PUT AWAY ALL THE SLURS AND INTORATIONS AND INSULTS.



MR. BENEDETT ALWAYS HAD SOME TERRIBLE THING TO SET ABOUT A MAN IN THE FORMAL PROFESSOR, AND OUTSIDE THE DRUG-STORE, MR. BENEDETT MET UP WITH MR. STUYVESANT, THE CONTRACTOR.

SA, HELLO, BENEDETT. HOW'S BUSINESS? ALL, YEAH, YEAH? BET YOU'RE GOING AT IT **TOOTH AND NAIL**. DID YOU **SET IT?** I SAID **TOOTH AND NAIL**. AND HOW'S **YOUR BUSINESS**, MR. STUYVESANT?



AND ON IT WENT, PERSON AFTER PERSON.

SAY, HOW DO YOUR HANDS GET SO **COLD**? BENEDETT OLD MAN? THAT'S A **COLD SHAKE** YOU GOT THERE. YOU JUST GET SOME EMBALMING A **FRESH WOMAN!** YEAH, THAT'S **NOT BAD**, YOU HEARD **WHAT I SAID?** **GOOD, GOOD!** WELL...**GOOD** SAY!



MR. BENEDETT WAS THE LAKE INTO WHICH ALL REFUSE WAS THROWN. PEOPLE BEGAN WITH NEEDLES, AND WHEN MR. BENEDETT DID NOT RATTLE, THEY HEAVED A STONE... A BRICK... A BOULDER -

THERE YOU ARE, NEXT CHOPPER! HOW ARE ALL YOUR CORNED-BEEFS AND PORKED BRAINS?



THAT WAS MR. FLUNGER, THE DELICATESSER MAN. THERE WERE MORE, MANY MORE. THINGS WORKED TO A CRESCENDO. FINALLY, MR. BENEDETT TURNED WILDT AND RAN BACK THROUGH TOWN. HE WAS ALL READY NOW -

SOME BODY WAIT! ON YOU, MR. BENEDETT? HEY? SET IT? I SAID SOME **GOOD!**



THE AWFUL PART OF THE DAY WAS OVER. THE GOOD PART WAS NOW TO BEGIN! HE RAN EAGERLY UP THE STEPS OF HIS MORTUARY.



THE ROOM WAITED LIKE A FALL OF SNOW. THERE WERE WHITE HUMMOCKS AND PALE DELINEATIONS OF THINGS RECUMBENT UNDER SHEETS IN THE DIMNESS. MR. BENEDETT FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR.



HE WAS THE PUPPET-MASTER COME HOME.

HE STOOD FOR A LONG MINUTE IN THE VERY CENTER OF HIS THEATER. IN HIS HEAD APPLAUSE, PERHAPS. THUNDERED. THEN HE CAREFULLY REMOVED HIS COAT, GOT INTO A FRESH WHITE SMOCK, AND RUBBED HIS HANDS TOGETHER AS HE LOOKED AT HIS VERY GOOD FRIENDS. - HEH, HEH, HEH. -



HE WALKED ALONG THE SLEEPING ROWS OF SWEETED PEOPLE. IT HAD BEEN A FINE WEEK, THERE WERE ANY NUMBER OF FAMILY RELICS LYING THERE. HE NOTED EACH NAME ON ITS WHITE CARD...



MR. BENEDICT LIFTED A SHEET AS IF LOOKING FOR A CHILD UNDER A BED...



HOW ARE YOU TODAY, MRS. SHELLMUND? YOU'RE LOOKING **SPLENDID**, DEAR LADY!

MR. BENEDICT PULLED UP A CHAIR AND REGARDED MRS. SHELLMUND THROUGH A MAGNIFYING GLASS...

MY DEAR MRS. SHELLMUND, DO YOU REALIZE, MY LADY, THAT YOU HAVE A **SEVERE** CONDITION OF THE FORESKIN AND **GREASE PIMPLES**. A RICH, RICH DIET WAS YOUR TROUBLE. TOO MANY **PROSTERS** AND **SPONGE CAKES** AND **CREAM DANDIES**. YOU ALWAYS **PRIDED** YOURSELF ON YOUR **BRAIN**, MRS. SHELLMUND...



BUT YOU **KEPT** THAT WONDERFUL, PRICELESS BRAIN OF YOURS AFOLOFT IN **PARFAITS** AND **FIZZES** AND **LIMEADES** AND **SODAS** AND WERE SO VERY **SUPERIOR** TO ME THAT **NOW**, MRS. SHELLMUND, HERE IS WHAT **SHALL HAPPEN**...



MR. BENEDICT DID A HEAT OPERATION ON HER, CUTTING THE SCALP IN A CIRCLE. HE LIFTED IT OFF, THEN LIFTED OUT THE BRAIN. THEN HE PREPARED A CAKE OF CONFETTI—THOSE LITTLE SUGAR-BELLOWS AND SQUIRTED HER EMPTY HEAD FULL OF WHIPPED CREAM AND CRYSTAL, REMONCE, STARS AND PROLIPS, IN PINK, WHITE AND GREEN, AND ON TOP HE PRINTED A FINE PINK SCROLL...



THEN HE PUT THE SKULL BACK ON AND SEWED IT IN PLACE AND HID THE MARKS WITH WAX AND POWDER AND WALKED ON TO THE NEXT TABLE...

GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. WREN. AND NOW IS THE **MASTER OF RACIAL HATREDS** TO MEET **PURE, WHITE LAUNDERED** MR. WREN. **CLEAN AS SNOW, WHITE AS LIME**. THE MAN WHO HATED JEWS AND NEURDES. DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO **DO** TO YOU, MR. WREN? FIRST, LET US **DRAW** YOUR **BLOOD** FROM YOU, INTOLEANT FRIEND!



THE BLOOD WAS DRAWN OFF...

NOW... THE INJECTION OF, YOU MIGHT SAY, **EMBALMING FLUID**.



MR. WREN, BROWN-WHITE, LINDEN PINE, LAY WITH THE FLUID GOING IN HIM, MR. BENEDICT LAUGHED. MR. WREN TURNED BLACK. BLACK AS DIRT. BLACK AS ASBEST.



THE SMALL MINI FLUID WAS... 100%

MR. BENEDICT BEVERED WORTH'S HEAD, PUT IT IN A COFFIN ON A SMALL PILLOW, FACING UP, THEN HE PLACED ONE HUNDRED NINETY POUNDS OF BRICKS IN THE COFFIN AND ARRANGED THEM TO LOOK LIKE A BODY IT WAS A FINE ILLUSION



THE OTHER TWO CASSETS WERE FILLED WITH PEBBLES AND SHELLS AND RAVELS OF SINGHAM. IT WAS A RITE SERVICE, EVERYBODY CRIED...



THOSE THREE INSEPARABLES, AT LAST SEPARATED?

HEP, HEM

MR. BENEDICT MOVED ON

AND HELD TO YOU, EDMUND WORTH. WHAT A HANDSOME BODY YOU HAD, POWERFUL, WITH MUSCLES PINNED FROM HIBE BONE TO HUBE BONE, AND A CHEST LIKE A BOULDER. WOMEN GREW SPEECHLESS WHEN YOU WALKED BY... MEN STARED WITH ENVY? AND NOW, HERE YOU ARE...



SINCE IT WAS A GROWING AND POPULAR HABIT IN THE TOWN FOR PEOPLE TO BE BURIED WITH THE COFFIN LIDS CLOSED OVER THEM DURING THE SERVICE, THIS GAVE MR. BENEDICT GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO VENT HIS REPRESSIONS ON HIS HAPLESS GUESTS. HE HAD THE MOST UTTERLY WINDOUS FUN WITH A GROUP OF OLD MAIDEN LADIES WHO WERE WASHED IN AN AUTO ON THEIR WAY TO AN AFTER-NOON TEA. THEY WERE FAMOUS GOSSIP, ALWAYS WITH HEADS TOGETHER OVER SOME CHOICE BIT. AN IN LIFE, ALL THREE WERE CROWDED INTO ONE CASSET, HEADS TOGETHER IN ETERNAL GOLD RETRIFFED GOSSIP



NOT LACKING FOR A SENSE OF JUSTICE, MR. BENEDICT BURNED ONE RICH MAN STARK NAKED.



A POOR MAN HE BURIED WOUND IN GOLD CLOTH, WITH FIVE DOLLAR GOLD PICTS FOR BUTTONS AND TWENTY DOLLAR GOLD COINS ON EACH EYELID.



A LATER HE DID NOT BURN AT ALL, NOT BURN! HIM IN THE INCINERATOR...



HIS COFFIN CONTAINED NOTHING BUT A POLE-CAT, TRAPPED IN THE WOODS ONE SUNDAY.



AN OLD MAN WAS THE VICTIM OF A TERRIBLE DEVISE. UNDER THE SILKEN COMFORTER, PARTS OF AN OLD MAN HAD BEEN BURIED WITH HER, THERE SHE LAY BEING MADE COLD LOVE TO BY HIDDEN HANDS AND THINGS. THE SHOES SHOWED ON HER FACE, SOMEWHAT...



SO MR. BENEDICT MOVED FROM BODY TO BODY IN HIS MORTUARY. THE FINAL BODY OF THE DAY WAS THE BODY OF ONE MERRIWELL BLYTHE, AN ANCIENT MAN AFFLICTED WITH SPELLS AND COMAS. MR. BLYTHE HAD BEEN BROUGHT IN FOR DEAD SEVERAL TIMES, BUT EACH TIME HE HAD REVIVED IN TIME TO PREVENT PREMATURE BURIAL. MR. BENEDICT PULLED BACK THE SHEET...



MR. BENEDICT FELL AGAINST THE SLAB, SUDDENLY SHAKEN AND SHOCK...



THE OLD MAN ON THE SLAB SAILED, ROLLING HIS EYES ABOUT IN HIS HEAD IN WHITE ORBITS...

OH, YOU DARK DARK THING, YOU ANGEL THING, YOU NO... FIEND, YOU MONSTER, GET ME UP FROM HERE! I'LL TELL THE MAYOR AND THE COUNCIL AND EVERYONE, OH, YOU DARK DARK THING! YOU DEFILED AND SAKIST, YOU PERVERTED SCOUNDREL... YOU TERRIBLE MAN...



THE OLD MAN SHRIEKED, FROTHING...

TO THINE THIS HAS GONE ON IN OUR TOWN... ALL THESE YEARS AND WE NEVER JONER THE THE THINGS YOU DID TO PEOPLE! OH YOU MONSTROUS MONSTER, THE THINGS YOU SAID! THE THINGS YOU DO!



MR. BENEDICT REACHED FOR A HYPODERMIC...

MR. BENEDICT STABBED MR. BLITHE IN THE ARM WITH THE NEEDLE. THE OLD MAN CRIED WILDLY TO ALL THE SHEETED FIGURES...

YOU'LL HELP ME!
YOU OUT THERE, UNDER
THE STONES, HELP
ME! LISTEN!



THE OLD MAN FELL BACK. HE KNEW HE WAS DYING...

ALL, LISTEN! WE'VE DONE THIS TO ME, AND FOR, AND FOR, ALL OF YOU. HE'S DONE TOO MUCH, TOO LONG. DON'T TAKE IT! DON'T, DON'T LET HIM DO ANY MORE TO ANYONE!



MR. BENEDICT STOOD THERE...

THEY CAN'T DO ANYTHING TO ME... AND NEITHER CAN YOU!

OUT OF YOUR GRAVES, HELP ME! TONIGHT, OR TOMORROW, OR SOON. BUT COME AND GET HIM... THIS HORRIBLE MAN!



THE OLD MAN RAVED ON AND ON, GETTING WEAKER. THE ROOM WAS SUDDENLY VERY DARK. IT WAS NIGHT. IT WAS GETTING LATE. FINALLY, SMILING, THE OLD MAN WHISPERED...

THEY'VE TAKEN A LOT FROM YOU, HORRIBLE MAN. TONIGHT, THEY'LL... DO... SOMETHING.



... AND THEN, THE OLD MAN DIED.

PEOPLE SAY THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION THAT NIGHT, IN THE GRAVEYARD, OR RATHER A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS, A SMELL OF STRANGE THINGS, A MOVEMENT, A VIBRANCE, A RAINING, STONES TOPPLED AND THINGS SWIRLED...



... AND THERE WAS A CHANGING AND A SCREAMING, AND MANY SHADOWS... MOVING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE MORTUARY BUILDING IN SWIFT JERKS AND SHAMBLES. WINDOWS BROKE. DOORS WERE TORN FROM HINGES, LEAVES FROM TREES, IRON GATES CLATTERED...



... AND IN THE END, THERE WAS MR. BENEDICT RUNNING ABOUT, BUNNING ABOUT, YAWNING, AND A TORTURED SCREAM THAT COULD ONLY BE MR. BENEDICT HIMSELF...



AFTER THAT... NOTHING SUFT.

THE TOWN PEOPLE ENTERED THE MORTUARY THE NEXT MORNING. THEY SEARCHED THE MORTUARY BUILDING AND THEN WENT OUT INTO THE BRAYETARD, AND THEY FOUND NOTHING BUT BLOOD, A VAST QUANTITY OF BLOOD, SPRINKLED AND THROWN AND SPREAD EVERYWHERE YOU COULD POSSIBLY LOOK, AS IF THE HEAVENS HAD BLED PROFUSELY IN THE NIGHT...



WHERE COULD HE BE?

HOW SHOULD WE KNOW?

WALKING THROUGH THE BRAYETARD, THEY STOOD IN DEEP TREE SHADOWS WHERE STONES, ROW ON ROW, WERE OLD AND TIME-ERODED AND LEANING. NO BIRDS SANG. THEY STOPPED BY ONE TOMBSTONE...



HERE, NOW! LOOK AT THIS...

FRESHLY SCRATCHED, AS IF BY FEEDLY, FRANTIC, RASTY FINGERS IN THE GREYISH, MOSS-FLECKED STONE WAS THE NAME: MR. BENEDET...



GOOD LORD!

LOOK... OVER HERE, THIS ONE TOO... AND THIS ONE AND THIS ONE...

A VILLAGER POINTED TO THE OTHER GRAVESTONES, UPON EACH AND EVERY STONE, SCRATCHED BY FINGER-NAIL SCRATCHINGS, THE SAME MESSAGE APPEARED: MR. BENEDET...



BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

THE TOWN PEOPLE WERE STUNNED...

HE... HE COULDN'T BE BURIED UNDER ALL THESE GRAVESTONES!



THEY STOOD THERE FOR ONE LONG MOMENT. INSTINCTIVELY THEY ALL LOOKED AT ONE ANOTHER NERVOUSLY IN THE SILENCE AND THE TREE DARKNESS. THEY ALL WAVED ONE AN OTHER WITH FUMBLING, SENSELESS LIPS, ONE OF THEM REPLIED, SIMPLY...



COULDN'T HE?

HEE, HEE! SO, THAT'S THE *DISH, DRAVE*, HAVE YOU FOUND IT A TASTY TALE. THIS BOY BRADBURY HAS WRITTEN AN IMMORTALITY, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? WELL, THAT ABOUT WINDS UP THE GRIFT-KEEPER'S MAD, I'LL JUST POUR SOME BLOOD ON THE FIRE



UNDER MY DAGGLEDON, LAP UP THE LAST TRACE OF THIS ISSUE'S CULINARY CONCOCTION, AND GET READY FOR MY NEXT HORROR HELPING, WHICH WILL BE IN THE MULLET-KEEPER'S MAD, THE WULT OF HORROR! 'BYE, NOW!

You Can WIN
This 15¢ toll
FREE TROPHY
with a 1000 or
10 MINUTES
OF FUN
A DAY!

**I GAINED
OF SHAPELY
53 LBS. POWER-PACKED
MUSCLES!**



Which of these
2 ME'S
is YOU ?

THAT 112 LB.-6 FT.
SPINDLE-ARMED Sissy was ME
A FEW SHORT WEEKS AGO

**THIS MAY BE
YOUR LAST
CHANCE**
TO GET FOR
ALL 5 10¢
PICTURE BOOKS COURTESY
MILLIONS HAVE
BEEN SOLD FOR
21 AND MORE!

What I don't care is
a trophy, but what
I care is my own
body. I don't think I
could have a stronger
body if I were 6'10"
tall. I don't care how
big I am, I care how
strong I am. I've
been training for
10 years and I've
never seen a man
with a stronger body
than I do. I've
seen a lot of men
with a stronger body
than I do, but I
don't care. I care
about my own body.

Regis Oberhel
NEW YORK
NEW
Thank you
for giving me a new
ROGER Let's
send him by!



ROGER HIRSCH
was a 112 lb. 6ft. WEAKLING.
Look of Him NOW—
A MOVIE STAR HE-MAN.

from Star to Top
**as YOU
can be
soon!**



NO! friend you
don't have to be
SKINNY any more
just mail **NOW**
the **FREE**
coupon below
as I did. Soon
YOU can add
6 1/2 inches to your **CHEST**
3 inches to each **ARM**
and the rest
in proportion
just as I did



Come on, PAL, NOW
YOU GIVE ME
10 PLEASANT MINUTES A
DAY IN YOUR HOME ... AND I'LL GIVE
YOU A NEW HE-MAN BODY
For Your OLD SKELETON FRAME.

By George G. Jovell *World's Greatest*
Builder of HE-MEN

NO! I don't care how skinny or bobby you are. If you're
10 years old, in your 20's or 30's or over, if you're
short or tall, or what work you do. All I want is JUST
10 QUICK MINUTES in your home to MAKE YOU OVER
by the SAME METHOD I turned myself from a weak
to a Champion of Champions.

YES! You'll see 1000 copies 1000 of MIGHTY MUSCLE added to
YOUR ARMS. You don't descend Your BACK AND
SHOULDERS kneaded like lead in hours, you'll gain **ROUNDS,**
100 POUNDS (2-300) that's because an ALL-AROUND, ALL-DAY
of MAN, A MIRACLE in everything you touch—or my training won't
test you see certainly can't.

**Develop YOUR \$20 MUSCLES
Gain Pounds, INCHES, FAST!**

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known to develop your body. Then I devised the BEST by 1000, NO
"SHORT PROGRESSIVE POWER" (the only method that builds you 50 lbs. in
test. You save YEARS, DOLLARS and more when you take My Life
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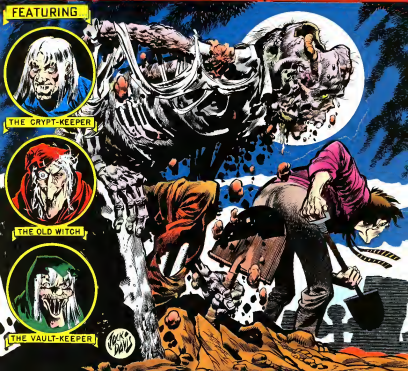
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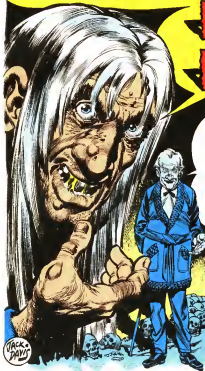
HEH, HEH! BACK FOR MORE, FIENDISH FANS? WELCOME AGAIN TO THE CRAWLY CRYPT. THIS IS YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER... YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, MASTER OF SCARE-A-MONIES, AND A! TERROR-TALE-TELLER... READY TO REVEAL ANOTHER REVOLTING RECITATION FROM MY LIBRARY OF LOATHSOME LITERATURE. THIS SPINE-TINGLING SCREAM-STORY WILL BE TOLD BY A DR. CARL WINSTON, IN HIS OWN WHIMPERING WORDS. DR. WINSTON... IF YOU PLEASE... GO AHEAD WITH THE YELP-YARN YOU CALL...

DEAD RIGHT!

JOSEPH FAIRBANKS AND I HAD BEEN LIFE-LONG FRIENDS. WE'D MET IN MEDICAL SCHOOL, AND THROUGH OUR INTERNSHIP AND ON INTO OUR PRACTICING YEARS OUR FRIENDSHIP HAD GROWN. JOSEPH HAD BECOME ONE OF THE NATION'S OUTSTANDING SURGEONS, AND I'D ENJOYED NO SMALL SUCCESS AS A HEART SPECIALIST. NEITHER OF US HAD MARRIED AND CONSEQUENTLY, AS WE'D GROWN OLDER, WE'D SOUGHT EACH OTHER'S COMPANY MORE AND MORE TO FILL THE LONELINESS OF BACHELOR LIFE. WHEN OUR WHIRL DAYS HAD PASSED, AND A CONTENTMENT FOR JUST SITTING BY AN OPEN FIRE AND SIPPING BRANDY HAD COME UPON US, WE'D MADE IT A POINT TO VISIT EACH OTHER'S HOMES AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK... USUALLY ON FRIDAY NIGHTS...

GOOD EVENING,
JOSEPH!

COME IN, CARL... COME
IN!



SINCE NEITHER JOSEPH NOR I HAD FAMILIES OR CLOSE RELATIVES, IN DEFERENCE TO OUR CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WE HAD ARRANGED OUR WILLS SO THAT WE WERE EACH OTHERS' INHERITORS.

SIT DOWN, CARL! WILL IT BE THE USUAL? BRANDY?

YES, JOSEPH! AH... THE FIRE FEELS GOOD TONIGHT. THIS DAMP WEATHER ALWAYS SETTLES IN MY BONES.



OF COURSE, JOSEPH AND I HAD HAD OUR DIFFERENCES, TOO, LIKE THAT SILLY THEORY OF HIS THAT HE WOULD UNFAILINGLY BRING UP EVERY TIME WE WERE TOGETHER...

BUT, ACTUALLY, CARL, HOW DO WE KNOW? HOW DO WE KNOW A MAN IS REALLY DEAD? WHO'S TO SAY THAT HE CANNOT HEAR OR SEE OR FEEL WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND HIM?

BECAUSE, MY DEAR JOSEPH, HIS HEART HAS STOPPED! THE BLOOD NO LONGER FLOWS TO HIS BRAIN! THE CELLS DIE FOR LACK OF OXYGEN!



I THINK THAT THE OLDER WE'D GOTTEN, THE MORE CHILDISH WE'D BECOME ABOUT THIS CONTINUOUS DISAGREEMENT OVER JOSEPH'S RIDICULOUS THEORY. WE'D COME TO FIGHT ABOUT IT AS TWO CHILDREN FIGHT OVER WHO'S TO BE 'IT' IN TAG...

AH... THAT IS THE POINT, CARL! SUPPOSE THE BRAIN CELLS DO NOT DIE MINUTES AFTER THE HEART STOPS. SUPPOSE THEY CONTINUE TO LIVE FOR HOURS... MAYBE DAYS?

BUT WE KNOW THAT BRAIN CELLS CANNOT LAST FIFTEEN MINUTES WITHOUT OXYGEN!

IN THEIR NORMAL STATE... YES, BUT SUPPOSE THAT AT THE MOMENT OF HEART CESSATION... WHETHER THROUGH BODY INJURY OR SIMPLE FAILURE... SUPPOSE THAT THE BRAIN CELLS GO INTO A STATE OF SHOCK... OF REDUCED METABOLISM...

REDUCED METABOLISM?! SNOCK?! HOW RIDICULOUS!

BUT ISN'T IT POSSIBLE, CARL, THAT THE SENSORY FUNCTIONS OF THE BODY CAN CONTINUE AFTER WHAT WE PRESUMPTUOUSLY CALL 'DEATH'?

IF THE BRAIN CELLS DIE, SENSORY FUNCTIONS CEASE!



RIDICULOUS? NO! POSSIBLE! VERY POSSIBLE! IN A STATE OF SHOCK, WHERE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE BRAIN CELL WERE CURTAILED, THE LITTLE OXYGEN LEFT IN THE PROTOPLASM AT THE MOMENT OF HEART FAILURE WOULD BE ENOUGH TO PROLONG THE LIFE OF THE GELL FOR HOURS.

SO A DEAD MAN IS NOT REALLY DEAD WHEN HE IS PRONOUNCED DEAD, EH? HE CAN STILL FEEL AND SEE AND HEAR, ALTHOUGH HE CANNOT MOVE...

EXACTLY! THINK OF THE NUMBER OF CORPSES YOU'VE SEEN WHOSE EYES ARE STILL OPEN... WHOSE EYES WE THOUGHTFULLY PRESS CLOSED WITH PENNIES OR WADS OF COTTON UNDER THE LIDS. THINK OF THE HORROR OF HAVING YOUR EYES FORCED SHUT AND HELD SHUT... WHEN YOUR EYES CAN STILL SEE...

JOSEPH! THIS THEORY OF YOURS IS SHEER POPPY-COCK!



THINK OF THE HORROR OF LISTENING TO YOUR BLOOD BEING PUMPED FROM YOUR BODY OF EMBALMING FLUID BEING FORCED IN! THE PAIN! THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN! AND LISTENING TO YOUR OWN FUNERAL CEREMONY... OF FEELING THE CLOSENESS OF THE COFFIN... THE LID SLAMMING SHUT... PERHAPS BEING NAILED!

STOP IT, JOSEPH!

THINK OF FEELING YOURSELF BEING LOWERED INTO THE GRAVE... THE THUMPING OF EARTH BEING SHOVELD DOWN ON TOP OF YOU... AND THEN... ONLY THEN... FADING AND ACTUALLY DYING!

GOOD LORD, JOSEPH, I SHALL LEAVE THIS MINUTE IF YOU PERSIST IN CONTINUING THIS SHOULSH CONVERSATION...

AS I SAID, WE WERE JUST LIKE CHILDREN. I HAD TO THREATEN TO LEAVE IN ORDER TO GET JOSEPH TO STOP HIS NONSENSE. THE REST OF THE EVENING WOULD BE PLEASANT AND WE'D REMAIN THE BEST OF FRIENDS, BUT LAST NIGHT WAS DIFFERENT. LAST NIGHT WAS VERY DIFFERENT...

SIT DOWN, CARL! WILL IT BE THE USUAL? BRANDY!

YES, JOSEPH! BRANDY WILL BE FINE!

LAST NIGHT WE'D SAT BEFORE THE FIRE, SIPPING OUR BRANDIES, AND JOSEPH DIDN'T ONCE BRING UP HIS RIDICULOUS THEORY. INSTEAD HE TALKED OF INVESTMENTS AND BAD LUCK AND SOME SUCH NONSENSE. I HADN'T PAID MUCH ATTENTION. FACT IS, I'D THOUGHT OF A NEW ARGUMENT AGAINST HIS THEORY AND WAS WAITING, MULLING IT OVER IN MY MIND...

SO YOU SEE, CARL. I'M BANKRUPT!

EH? WHA...? JOSEPH! DID YOU SAY YOU'RE BANKRUPT?

THAT'S RIGHT, CARL. AND I'M BADLY IN DEBT! I NEED MONEY! A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY!

WHY I'LL GLADLY LEND YOU WHAT YOU NEED, JOSEPH!

LEND, CARL? DON'T BE SILLY! I'M TAKING IT! YOUR WHOLE FORTUNE! YOU SEE... I'VE POISONED YOUR BRANDY...

JOSEPH! NO!

I STAGGERED TO MY FEET. I FELT WEAK AND DIZZY AND MY LEGS AND ARMS WERE TINGLING...

DON'T BOTHER TRYING ANY EMETICS, CARL. THE POISON IS A FAST-ACTING ONE. YOU'LL BE DEAD IN A MOMENT.

JOSEPH! HOW COULD YOU...

I WAS HALF-WAY ACROSS THE ROOM WHEN I SIMPLY COLLAPSED TO THE FLOOR. I TRIED TO MOVE. I TRIED TO SPEAK. IT WAS AS THOUGH I WERE COMPLETELY PARALYZED.

GOOD-BYE, CARL.
THANK YOU FOR THE
INHERITANCE.



HE CAME AND STOOD OVER ME. I COULD SEE CLEARLY, YET I COULDN'T MOVE MY EYES. THEY WERE GLUED IN THE ONE POSITION. JOSEPH MOVED INTO MY LINE OF VISION AND KNELT BESIDE ME. I FELT HIM LIFT MY LIMP HAND...

NO PULSE. YOU'RE DEAD,
CARL! STONE DEAD!



DEAD? HOW COULD I BE DEAD? I COULD SEE... I COULD FEEL... I COULD HEAR JOSEPH DIALING THE TELEPHONE...

HELLO, NORTON FUNERAL PARLOR? THAT YOU, BEN? THIS IS DOCTOR JOSEPH FAIRBANKS. YOU'D BETTER GET OVER HERE AND BRING YOUR WICKER...



DOCTOR CARL WINSTON NO! JUST DIED! YES. AT MY HOUSE! HEART ATTACK... OH, PLEASE. NO!



I HEARD JOSEPH HANG UP. I HEARD HIM APPROACH AND I SAW HIS FACE WHEN HE LEANED OVER ME... HIS LEERING FACE...

POOR CARL! HOW WE USED TO ARGUE... ABOUT SILLY THEORIES... THEORIES THAT I DIDN'T BELIEVE MYSELF!



OH LORD, WHAT HE WAS SAYING TO ME... THINKING I COULDN'T HEAR... KNOWING I WAS DEAD...

BUT I NEVER COULD GET YOU ANGRY ENOUGH, COULD I, CARL? I NEVER COULD GET YOU SO UPSET YOU'D DROP DEAD! NO! I HAD TO POISON YOU TO GET YOUR MONEY... YOUR ESTATE...



THEN, A PAIN... A HORRIBLE EXCRUCIATING PAIN IN MY CHEST... AND JOSEPH GRINNING DOWN AT ME AND BRAGGING...

IT WILL BE SIMPLE, CARL. I'M A PHYSICIAN. I'LL SIGN THE DEATH CERTIFICATE. DEATH... BY NATURAL CAUSES. NO ONE WOULD QUESTION A SURGEON'S WORD... AH THE BELL! THE UNGERTAKER IS HERE...



BEN NORTON CAME IN LOOKING VERY SAD. JOSEPH'S VOICE CHANGED. NOW, AS HE SPOKE, HE SOUNDED GENUINELY BEREAVED...

IT WAS AWFUL, BEN? AWFUL! ONE MINUTE, SITTING AND DRINKING! THE NEXT MINUTE, DEAD!

HOW'D IT HAPPEN, DOC?

WE WERE ARGUING ABOUT SOMETHING OR OTHER. A MEDICAL THEORY OF MINE. CARL WAS SHOUTING. HE MUST HAVE BECOME TOO EMOTIONALLY UPSET. HIS HEART.

TOO BAD. SUCH A NICE GUY! WELL...I'LL GET HIS BODY ON DOWNTOWN...

I'LL GO WITH YOU, BEN! OH... SINCE I'M THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD CARL HAD... NO FAMILY, YOU KNOW... THERE'S NO USE DRAGGING THIS OUT. ARRANGE FOR A SMALL DIGNIFIED FUNERAL... TOMORROW...

SURE! WHY WASTE TIME? I GOT A WICKER IN THE TRUCK. C'MON AND HELP ME...



YOU... YOU WHO ARE READING THIS STORY! HOW CAN YOU UNDERSTAND HOW I FELT? HOW CAN YOU KNOW THE HORROR THAT GREPT UP MY RIGID SPINE? I WAS DEAD. DEAD BY ALL STANDARDS. AND YET I COULD FEEL... COULD HEAR... COULD SEE THINGS MOVE AS THEY LIFTED ME AND PLACED ME INTO THE WICKER...

YEP. NICE GUY... THE DOC WAS...

HEAVY THOUGH. HEAVY PEOPLE ARE MORE APT TO SUFFER HEART TROUBLE...



I COULD SEE THEM LOOKING DOWN AT ME. BUT I COULDN'T BLINK... COULDN'T MOVE AN EYELID... COULDN'T LIVE... EVER AGAIN...

LOOK, BEN. HIS EYES...

YEAH. I KNOW. THEY'RE OPEN. ALMOST LIKE HE WAS SEEN' US, EH? WELL...



BEN REACHED DOWN AND I FELT HIS FINGERTIPS TOUCH MY EYELIDS, PUSHING THEM CLOSED. AND NOW I WAS SHROUDED IN THE DARKNESS OF DEATH. BUT I COULD STILL HEAR. I COULD STILL FEEL THEM LIFT THE WICKER AND CARRY ME. I COULD IMAGINE WHAT WAS HAPPENING. THEY WERE PUTTING ME INTO THE BACK OF THE BLACK PANEL TRUCK WITH THE BLACK CURTAINED WINDOWS...

EASY, NOW...

WHY...? HE CAN'T FEEL THE GUMPS...



I COULD HEAR THEM GET IN THE FRONT... HEAR THE ENGINE START... FEEL THE MOTION OF RIDING... RIDING INTO TOWN TO THE FUNERAL PARLOR...

WELL... HERE WE ARE.

HELP ME GET HIM OUT...



I COULD HEAR THE BACK DOORS OPEN AGAIN. I COULD FEEL THE WICKER BEING LIFTED AND CARRIED INTO THE COLD WHITE ROOM WITH THE NEEDLES AND TUBES. I COULD SMELL THE PERFUME THAT TRIED TO HIDE THE FORMALDEHYDE DOOR...



PUT IT DOWN
HERE...

YES...

I COULD FEEL MYSELF BEING LIFTED... BEING PLACED ON A COLD SURFACE... A MARBLE TABLE...



I'LL GET THINGS READY!
CARE TO WATCH?

I DON'T MIND...

I COULD HEAR THE RUSTLING WHISPER OF HOSES, THE SHARP CLINKING OF BOTTLES, THE HUM OF PUMP-MOTORS STARTING...



FIRST... WE DRAIN
THE BLOOD.

I SEE...

I FELT WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN A NEEDLE ENTERING MY ARM, BUT THERE WAS NO PAIN. JOSEPH HAD BEEN WRONG. THERE WAS NO PAIN, EVEN AS THE LAST DROP OF BLOOD DRIPPED OUT OF MY BODY AND I HEARD IT GURLING DOWN A DRAIN SOMEWHERE...



NOW THE
EMBALMING
FLUID!

OH...

ANOTHER PUMP. ANOTHER NEEDLE PRESSING AGAINST MY DEAD FLESH. MORE GURLING...



I'LL SEE ABOUT
A GOFFIN!

NOT TOO
EXPENSIVE,
NOW!

JOSEPH DIDN'T WANT TO SEE HIS MONEY WASTED. NOT TOO EXPENSIVE. I WANTED TO SCREAM, BUT HOW COULD I? DEAD MEN DON'T SCREAM. THEY ONLY LIE STIFFLY... LISTENING... FEELING... AND CRYING INSIDE...



THIS ONE WILL DO!
REASONABLE, TOO!
HELP ME GET HIM
INTO IT!

FINE...

I WAS BEING LIFTED AGAIN. NOW I COULD FEEL THE SMOOTH SATIN AGAINST MY DEAD HANDS. THE CAMPHOR SMELL OF NEWNESS. I WAS BEING PUT INTO MY GOFFIN...



THERE...

NOW... YOU'LL ARRANGE
EVERYTHING... THE FUNERAL...
THE PLOT?

HOW LONG I LAY THERE I DO NOT KNOW. PERHAPS TIME, TO ONE DEAD, IS IMMEASURABLE. THE LID WAS SLAMMING DOWN...



BEING NAILED...



I WAS BEING MOVED AGAIN. A VOICE... EULOIZING ME... MY FUNERAL ORATION. I WAS HEARING IT ALL...



A MOTOR. THE COOLNESS OF OPEN AIR. I WAS BEING LOWERED INTO THE GRAVE. THE VOICE...



THE HOLLOW BOON OF DIRT CRASHING DOWN UPON THE COFFIN LID. THE HORROR... THE SCREAMING SILENT HORROR OF IT...



AND NOW, THE SHOVELING HAS STOPPED. THERE IS LAUGHTER AND VOICES...



THE LID IS CRACKING OPEN. A RUSH OF FRESH AIR CARRESSES MY FACE...



A FINGER TOUCHES MY EYES. THE NIGHT STARS TWINKLE DOWN AT ME. JOSEPH'S FACE CUTS ACROSS THEM, BLOCKING THEM OUT...



YOU'RE PARALYZED, CARL. YOU'RE NOT REALLY DEAD. IT'S A NEW TYPE ANAESTHETIC! I PUT IT INTO YOUR BRANDY!

JOSEPH GRINS AT ME. BEN NORTON IS BESIDE HIM...



WE STAGED THIS, CARL... BEN AND I, TOGETHER! YOU'RE IN THE GARDEN OUT IN BACK OF MY HOUSE...

IT ISN'T MORNING YET, CARL!

THE DRUG WILL BE WEARING OFF SOON...

WE DIDN'T EVEN GO TO THE FUNERAL PARLOR! I JUST DROVE YOU AROUND!



THEN WE BROUGHT YOU BACK TO THE HOUSE... INTO MY OFFICE. WE PRETENDED IT WAS THE FUNERAL PARLOR...



I LENT DOC FAIRBANKS A FEW OF MY PUMPS FOR SOUND EFFECTS... AND THIS COFFIN...

IT WAS A GAG, CARL. I WANTED TO SHOW YOU THAT MY THEORY COULD BE RIGHT! YOU ALMOST BELIEVED IT, DIDN'T YOU CARL? DIDN'T YOU?



DOC. IT'S FIVE-THIRTY! SHOULDN'T HE BE COMING OUT OF IT?

IT'S MORNING NOW. THE STARS HAVE GONE AND I FEEL THE SUN ON MY FACE. JOSEPH IS PLEADING WITH ME... TEARS IN HIS EYES. BEN NORTON'S FACE JUST GETS PALER AND PALER...



CARL! FOR GOD'S SAKE, CARL! COME OUT OF IT! IT'S A GAG, CARL. COME OUT OF IT... PLEASE...

OH, LORD HELP US...

POOR JOSEPH AND HIS THEORY. HE WANTED SO MUCH FOR ME TO ACCEPT IT. AND NOW I HAVE ACCEPTED IT! ONLY HE WON'T KNOW HE'S RIGHT! NOT UNTIL HE GOES THROUGH WHAT I'VE GONE THROUGH. FOR I AM DEAD. I DIED OF A HEART ATTACK JUST BEFORE THE UNDERTAKER GAME!

HEH, HEH! SO NEXT TIME YOU MEET A CORPSE, KIDDIES, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY, EH? YOU MIGHT HURT ITS NON-FEELINGS. AND NOW THAT YOU'VE FINISHED TELLING US YOUR LITTLE TALE, CARL, YOU CAN GO CRAWL BACK INTO YOUR COFFIN AGAIN AND I'LL TUCK YOU IN WITH A BLANKET OF GRAVE-SRAVEL. WHILE I'M SHOVELING, FIENDS, WHY DON'T YOU SHOVEL ALONG TO THE VAULT-KEEPER WHO,



BREATHLESSLY AND DRIPPING CROOL, AWATS WITH HIS GUEST-SPOT GORE-TALE, COMPLETE WITH GUARANTEED ACCOMPANYING NIGHTMARE. I'LL DIG YOU LATER!

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HDI, HEN! WELCOME TO THE VAULT OF HORROR, HIDIOTS. THIS IS YOUR SCREAM-STORY-SPINNER, THE VAULT-KEEPER, WAITING TO NARRATE ANOTHER NAUSEATING TALE FROM MY CREEPS-COLLECTION. SO COME IN, SIT DOWN, AND I'LL BEGIN. THIS WILL BE A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR YOU... SO RELAX AND BECOME THE MAIN CHARACTER IN A STORY THAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS TO YOU. I CALL THIS YELP-YARN...

PLEASANT SCREAMS!

IT IS AS IF YOU WERE SUDDENLY MOLDED OUT OF SILENCE AND INFINITE BLACKNESS AND YOU ARE NOW STANDING IN A STORMSWEEPED FOREST, FEELING THE WIND ON YOUR FACE AND HEARING THE SIGHING TREES BENDING UNDER ITS ON-SLAUGHT. YOU CANNOT REMEMBER ANYTHING BEFORE THIS MOMENT, THE PAST IS A VOID WITHOUT MEMORIES OR RECOLLECTIONS, AND YOU KNOW ONLY THAT YOUR NAME IS FELIX PURDY AND THAT YOU ARE AFRAID...



THERE IS A CRAWLING FEAR IN YOU, FELIX PURDY. YOU STAND BELOW THE TOWERING WINDSWEEPED TREES AND THE CLOUDS ABOVE LOOM LIKE MYSTERIOUS GHOST-SHAPES THAT HURRY BY BELOW A COLD MOON. YOUR HANDS TREMBLE AND YOUR BLOOD RUNS COLD AND YOUR HEART THROBS WILDLY IN YOUR CHEST. AND THEN YOU HEAR THE INHUMAN HOWL...



SHEER TERROR ROOTS YOU TO THE SPOT AND YOU SWAY LIKE THE TREES THAT SURROUND YOU...WAITING... LISTENING... AS THE HOWLING THING COMES CLOSER... AND THEN IT BURSTS FROM THE BLACK OVERGROWTH, AND THE GHOST-CLOUDS PART SO THAT THE COLD MOON ILLUMINATES IT...



AND NOW YOU'RE RUNNING, FELIX, AND SCREAMING, AND THE INHUMAN WOLF-THING IS LOPING AFTER YOU, FANGS BARED AND SPITTLE DROOLING FROM ITS FLAME-RED MOUTH...



YOU RUN TILL YOUR HEART IS A HAMMER SLAMMING INSIDE YOUR CHEST, NOW YOU CAN FEEL THE HOT FOUL BREATH OF THE WEREWOLF CLOSE BEHIND YOU...



SUDDENLY YOUR LEGS ARE RUBBER COLLAPSING BENEATH YOU AND YOU SPRAWL ON THE GROUND. THE WEREWOLF IS OVER YOU, ITS BLAZING EYES STARING DOWN, A LOW TRIUMPHANT GROWL ERUPTING FROM ITS HEAVING CHEST. IT HESITATES, WAITING WHILE YOU SCREAM AND COWER BEHIND UPRAISED PROTECTING ARMS...



AND THEN IT SPRINGS UPON YOU, AND ITS RAZOR-SHARP CLAWS ARE TEARING AT YOUR FLESH AND ITS KNIFE-LIKE FANGS ARE SINKING INTO YOUR BODY AND PULLING AND RIPPING AND SLASHING...



SUDDENLY THERE IS BLACKNESS AROUND YOU, ENDING THE PAIN, ENDING THE HORROR, AND THEN THE BLACKNESS FADES AND YOU ARE STANDING IN AN ALLEYWAY BETWEEN TALL BUILDINGS WITH BOARDED WINDOWS AND LOCKED DOORS AND YOU ARE AFRAID AGAIN...



YOU KNOW YOU ARE FELIX PURDY AND YOU KNOW YOU ARE A HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHER, BUT YOU CANNOT REMEMBER ANYTHING OF YOUR PAST... YOUR CHILDHOOD... LAST YEAR... LAST MONTH. YOU'VE SUDDENLY FOUND YOURSELF... AND YOU ARE YOU, AND THERE IS NO YESTERDAY... AND NOW YOU ARE IN AN ALLEY... AND FOOTSTEPS APPROACH...



A SHADOW LEAPS ACROSS THE GAPING ENTRANCE TO THE ALLEY. YOU COWER BACK INTO THE GLOOM. IT PEERS IN, ITS SLANTED EYES GLOWING, ITS NEEDLE-LIKE FANGS GLITTERING...



A.. VAMPIRE...

A BREEZE STIRS, RUSTLING PAPERS ON A TRASH PILE BEHIND YOU, SPINNING UP THE ALLEYWAY, CARRYING YOUR SCENT TO THE VAMPIRE'S SENSITIVE NOSTRILS. IT LIFTS ITS ARMS AND THE BLACK CAPE DRAPES FROM THEM LIKE BAT-WINGS AND THERE IS A DULL BEATING SOUND AS IT SEEMS TO GLIDE TOWARD YOU...



NO! OH, GOD... NO!

FOR A MOMENT YOU STAND CRINGING, FLATTENED AGAINST THE BUILDING WALL LIKE A YELLOWED POSTER, WATCHING IN MORBID FASCINATION AS THE BLOOD-HUNGRY BEAST MOVES TOWARD YOU...

AND THEN HORROR STRIKES AT YOU, SENDING YOU FLAILING DOWN THE ALLEY... DOWN INTO THE SHADOWS... RUNNING FROM THE HIDEOUS THING BEHIND YOU...

THE BOARD FENCE IS HIGH AND FLAT AND EXPRESSIONLESS. YOU FALL AGAINST IT SOBING. IT'S A BLIND ALLEY, AND YOU ARE TRAPPED... AND THE BEATING SOUND IS BEHIND YOU CLOSING IN ON YOU. YOU SINK TO YOUR KNEES...



K-K-KEEP AWAY...



HELP ME! OH, LORD.. HELP..



WHAT DID I DO? WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS... SOB... THIS TORTURE...

AND NOW THE VAMPIRE IS BENDING OVER YOU AND YOU CAN FEEL ITS NEEDLE-FANGS SINKING DEEP INTO YOUR THROAT AND ITS DRY LIPS SUCKING AROUND THE WOUNDS, DRAWING IN THE RED LIFE-FLUID IT CRAVES...

NOW EVERYTHING IS FADING AND THERE IS DARKNESS AGAIN AND YOU ARE STANDING IN A GRAVEYARD AND YOUR EYES ARE FILLED WITH TEARS. YOU ARE FELIX PURDY, SCHOOL TEACHER, WITH NO YESTERDAY AND NO TOMORROW, AND ONLY THE HORROR OF THE PRESENT TO LIVE FOR...



EEEEEEEE...GGGH...



WHY? WHY ALL THIS? WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHY MUST I SUFFER LIKE THIS?

THE GRAVEYARD ECHOES WITH THE SILENCE OF DEATH AND THE TOMBSTONES ARE BLANK FACES THAT DO NOT SMILE OR CRY OR SHOW PITY FOR YOU. THE MOUNDS ARE HEAPED HIGH OVER THE LATE AND DEPARTED AND THEIR GRASS IS YELLOWED FROM WINTER'S CHILL. YOU STAND AND WAIT, HALF-EXPECTING, HALF-KNOWING.



AND THEN YOU HEAR THE DRAGGING SOUND... THE SOUND OF FEET LONG DEAD AND DECOMPOSED AND CRAWLING WITH DECAY AND THE SLIME OF THE GRAVE. YOU HEAR THE DRAGGING FOOTSTEPS IN THE CHILL OF THE NIGHT, MOVING SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, UPON THE MOUNDS AND AROUND THE GRAVE MARKERS AND OVER THE DRY GRASS. AND YOU WAIT...



YOUR EYES BORE INTO THE DARKNESS AND YOU SEE THE ROTTING FOUL-SMELLING CORPSE STUMBLING TOWARD YOU. YOU GRIT YOUR TEETH, FIGHTING OFF THE REVULSION THAT SWEEPS OVER YOU...



AND NOW THE THING IS UPON YOU AND ITS OODOR SEARS YOUR NOSTRILS AND YOUR STOMACH HEAVES AND YOU HOLD YOUR BREATH SO AS NOT TO SUCK THE FETID STENCH INTO YOUR LUNGS. YOU FEEL THE PUTRID ARMS AROUND YOU AND THE MOLDY FLESH FALLING AWAY AND THE BONE FINGERS CRUSHING THE LIFE FROM YOU...



BUT YOUR LIFE DOES NOT FADE. ONLY THE SCENE FADES ONCE MORE, AND YOU STILL EXIST. THE BLACKNESS DESCENDS LIKE A CURTAIN AND LIFTS, AND THE GUILLOTINE RISES INTO THE MOONLIGHT...



YOU ARE FELIX PUROY, HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER. YOU ARE RESIGNED TO YOUR ROLE IN THIS GORY MATINEE. YOU WALK TO THE GUILLOTINE-STEPS AS IF YOU HAVE REHEARSED THIS ACTION WELL...



YOU LOOK UP AT THE GLEAMING BLADE HANGING BETWEEN THE TRACKS THAT CLIMB TOWARD THE STARLESS SKY. YOU KNEEL... RESIGNED...



YOU PLACE YOUR HEAD IN THE HOLLOWED KNIFE-BED AND YOU STARE DOWN AT THE WOVEN BASKET WAITING PATIENTLY TO RECEIVE ITS DUE. YOU HEAR THE BLADE SQUEELING DOWNWARD AND AN INVOLUNTARY CRY ESCAPES YOUR QUIVERING LIPS...



AND NOW YOU ARE BEHIND THE BLACK CURTAIN AGAIN, WAITING FOR THE NEXT TORTUROUS SCENE TO BE UNVEILED. YOU FLOAT IN A SEA OF DARKNESS... CRYING, WAITING, SPINNING...



AND YET, YOU SEEM TO RECALL A ROOM... LONG AGO... FAR AWAY... A ROOM WITH WHITE LEERING FACES... LITTLE MONSTERS... AND A LITTLE EVIL THING THAT SAT AND STARED AT YOU AND... AND... BUT IT IS ONLY A FAINT RECOLLECTION... AS THOUGH IT NEVER REALLY EXISTED...



AND NOW THE CURTAIN IS LIFTING AND THE SEA OF DARKNESS IS RECEDING AND YOU ARE STANDING IN AN OPEN FIELD WITH FOG CLINGING TO THE HOLLOW PLACES, AND THERE IS A GIGGLING. FACES... WHITE, LEERING FACES... SURROUND YOU...



AND THEN YOU SEE THE YAWNING PIT BEHIND THEM AND YOU SEE THE SHOVELS IN THEIR HANDS AND THEY CLOSE IN ON YOU... GIGGLING...



LITTLE CLAWING HANDS SEIZE YOU, PUSH YOU, AND YOU STIFFEN. BUT THERE ARE MANY HANDS AND YOU SKID TOWARD THE GAPING HOLE... SO LONG... SO NARROW... SO DEEP...



NOW YOUR FEET ARE AT THE PIT-EDGE, SLIDING. THE DIRT CHATTERS AS IT DROPS IN, AND THE MANY HANDS PUSH, AND YOU ARE FALLING... FALLING...



YOU LIE IN THE MOIST COLD EARTH AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HOLE AND YOU LOOK UP AT THEIR GRINNING FACES. THEN, YOU HEAR THE CRUNCHING SOUND AS A SPACE DIGG INTO THE MOUND OF SOIL BESIDE THE EXCAVATION...



THE DIRT CRASHES DOWN ON YOU, AND THE GIGGLING GROWS LOUDER. SPACES FLY... EARTH FALLS, YOU SCREAM... AND THE LAUGHTER SCREAMS BACK AT YOU.



YOU ARE FELIX PURDY, HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, FLOATING IN DARKNESS, LISTENING TO LAUGHTER... ENTHUSIASTIC, EFFERVESCENT LAUGHTER, YOUNG LAUGHTER. THE LAUGHTER OF...



YOU ARE FELIX PURDY... WITH NO PAST AND NO FUTURE... A CREATURE BORN OF NOW... BORN TO SUFFER... TO DIE A MILLION TIMES IN ONE BRIEF SPAN OF EXISTENCE. AND SOMEWHERE, REALITY IS LAUGHING AT YOU...



YOU HAVE DIED MANY TIMES IN THIS, YOUR BRIEF LIFE-SPAN, FELIX PURDY. YOU HAVE DIED IN MANY HORRIBLE VICIOUS WAYS. BUT NOW YOU KNOW...



Yes, FELIX PURDY SOMEWHERE, REALITY IS LAUGHING AT YOU. THE REALITY THAT SURROUNDS YOUR CREATOR...



AND THE LAUGHTER IS DESTROYING YOU, FELIX. EVEN NOW YOU CAN FEEL YOURSELF FADING...



FOR THIS, THEN, IS YOUR **REAL DEATH**, FELIX. THIS THEN IS **THE HORROR OF ALL THE HORRORS...** MORE **HORRIBLE** THAN YOUR DREAMER HAS CONCEIVED IN ANY OF HIS WILD WISH-DREAMS. IN A **MOMENT**, SLEEP WILL **VANISH**, AND SO WILL YOU...



NOW YOU ARE GONE, FELIX PURDY. YOU EXIST NO LONGER. NOW YOU ARE **REALLY DEAD**. YOU HEAR NO MORE LAUGHTER. DAYLIGHT HAS BLANCHED YOU AWAY. BUT THE **DREAMER** HEARS THE LAUGHTER...



A BOY. A BOY LIFTS HIS HEAD FROM HIS HIGH-SCHOOL DESK AND RUBS HIS EYES, SLEEPILY. HIS CLASSMATES SURROUND HIM...



THE BOY LOOKS AROUND. HIS TEACHER STANDS OVER HIM, FUMING...



THE BOY GRINS SLEEPILY. THE TEACHER DEFTLY APPLIES A RED PENCIL TO THE BARE EXAMINATION PAPER, SWINGING IT IN A LARGE CIRCLE...



BUT IT IS TOO LATE, FELIX PURDY. THE LAUGHTER IS LOUD. THE DREAMER STIRS. THERE IS A BLINDING LIGHT THAT IS LIKE WHITE-HOT LIQUID METAL, CASCADING AT YOU AND DISSOLVING YOU IN ITS BRILLIANCE...



HEH, HEH! SO NOW YOU KNOW HOW IT **FEELS** TO BE THE **MAIN CHARACTER** IN A **DREAM**, EH, FRIENDS? A **CHARACTER** THAT YOUR **DREAMER PARTICULARLY DISLIKES**... HEH, HEH... LIKE HIS **MATH TEACHER**... OR IS IT **LATIN**, OR MAYBE **ENGLISH**, IN YOUR CASE? WELL, THAT'S **MY TALE** FOR THIS ISSUE OF **C.K.'S MAG**. I'LL **DREAM UP ANOTHER NIGHTMARE** WHEN **NEXT WE MEET**. NOW, **C.K. AWAKES**, SO I'LL **TURN YOU BACK** TO HIM **ONIGHT!** PLEASANT... HEH... HEH... **DREAMS?**





HEH, HEH! YEP! IT'S ... THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

President and CEO—Stephen A. Gappi

Publisher—Ruaa Cochran

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I watch your show on HBO. And I buy your comics. I have also seen both your movies (DEMON, BORDELLO). I love the story in CRYPT 20 "How Green Was My Alley". Please print my address and could you send me some CRYPT stuff? Your #1 fan,

Petro (Coffin-Keeper) Boucouvalos II 35 School ST
Saco, ME 04072

I was wondering if you could send me some drawings (like the wax exhibits in the story "The Works...in Wax") if you can I would appreciate it. Thank you,

Darren Toland Clayville, PA

Freebies, freebies, freebies! Nobody ever went broke underestimating the taste of the public, and nobody ever got rich giving freebies! -CK

I'm a big fan of everything of yours, your action figures, comics, movies, everything. I was wondering if you could tell me where I could get your comics, movies, and toys, in Phoenix or Payson, AZ. Your big fan,

Joey Kellogg Payson, AZ

How come you don't have a fan club? There are a lot of toys and collectibles that I missed in stores, is there any sick-twisted way you could come out with a catalog?

Are you and Elvra ever going to make a movie? I love everything you do or make! Please print address.

Alex Harrow 14455 SW Sexton MTN DR #7E
Beverton, OR 97008

Now, here are boys ready to take part in a market economy! We'll rely on our readers to tell us about Arizona comics shops, but we offer many EC items (mostly 2D) by mail order ourselves. Writer for details.

Closest I've got to a fan club is the ECazine HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR, issue 9 is still available for \$10 from Bill Leach, 203 Bemaer DR, Pittsburg, CA 94565. He has other goodies, too! -CK

I am one of your ghoulish fans! I can't stop reading your terror-best comics and videos! They rule!!!! Keep up your witchy work! Your Ghoulish Murder,

Freddy Kruger Elm ST, USA

Hi! My name is Shauna. Most people call me "Crypt" because all I do is talk about you! I've seen every single show you've made. I also have seen and still see your new show "Secrets of the Crypt-Keeper's Haunted House." I love horror

My brother hates you. He says he's sick and tired of watching your show and hearing my laugh (oh I know how to laugh your laugh!). My Mom likes you too. We've watched both your movies DEMON NIGHT and BORDELLO OF BLOOD. They were great! Please print my address. Frightfully yours,

"Crypty" 2144 S 15th ST
Shauna Van Elss Philadelphia, PA 19145

What use are brothers, anyway (not counting target practice)? -CK

When I was a child in the fifties—after the comic book code had banished CRYPT and other EC publications—a few of us had issues of the magazine handed down to us by our older siblings. These were cherished archival possessions.

Imagine my delight to find issue #19! It was a wonderful nostalgic trip back to my early childhood. After forty years I still vividly remembered those stories and hoped that I'd be able to read them again some day. Thanks for the mummies!

Richard H. Bush Meriden, CT

And burning lips and burning ships and burning toast and prunes. -CK

It's me again, The Zombie Master. I would just like to ask if on VAULT 32, your #21, is the guy on the front going to have the meat cleaver hanging in his head. Also, I think that the rule for sending in your real name and address really bits some big. Also my friend and me draw our own Horror Comics. My friend draws just as good as the drawers for EC. (Print my address.)

The Zombie Master 114 Howard AV
Arnold, MD 21012

If that rapid Vault-Keeper doesn't chicken out, you'll see that cover uncovered next month. But did you know MY next issue will receive its first uncensored showing just 3 short months from now? -CK

After reading the first 19 issues of CRYPT and the other EC horror titles, I began to wonder if they hadn't been so bad after all, that maybe all the criticism they received in the prudish 50s was unwarranted. Thus, I had been providing my children with inexpensive 64-page reprints (after careful screening, of course). Then I got CRYPT 20 and read Ghatly's horrifying "The Handler." WOW!

At last I had found material so objectionable that there's no way in HELL I'll let my kids see it until they're 18! None of us want to think about what a mortician might do to us when our time comes to be prepared for our crypt, but

this story sure fuels our worst fears! The scene that was the nail in the coffin is what was done to the old maid ("Hands end things" ...EWWWWW!) Naturally, I loved the story. Keep up the good work on the reprints, and thanks for the chills.

Donald P Deaton Fort Wayne, IN

PS) To all of you underage readers out there. Close this comic IMMEDIATELY and take it to the nearest adult for review and potential censorship (They're not paying attention, are they? Well, I hope it scares the living CRAP out of them.)

Just like to keep you on your toes! -CK

I happen to be a big fan of yours. I would first off like to say Johnny Craig is the best EC Comic artist. Your comics keep me entertained and I am going to subscribe. I also want to say your story in VAULT '8 ("Let's Play Poison") was the best. I would like to list my 5 favorite stories from your bone chilling collection:

5) "The Maestro's Hand", 4) "Ghast Ship", 3) "Let's Play Poison", 2) "The Hungry Grave", 1) "A Mute Witness To Murder".

This summer I'm to work up at camp. I'll make sure to have an EC comic book in my hand.

John Aiken Centerville, VA

Especially during latrine breaks! -CK

Your stories are the best. I love your TV shows and movies. I was wondering if you could send me one of your best horror stories, maybe the ones about vampires or zombies. Your bloodsucking tale,

John Farren Austin, TX

My name is David Harfe and I really enjoy reading your comics, and collecting them. CRYPT '8 was brilliant, a real horror issue.

"Midnight Mess" was my favo story, the artwork was class. One thing, though. Page 2, panel 7, when Harold was seated in the restaurant why didn't the vampire waiter notice that Harold has a reflection, or Harold notice that the waiter has no reflection, in the mirror? Was the man sitting at the table a vampire, 'cos he had a reflection? Send some free comics. Please print my address. I want to hear from other EC fans. ECing you,

David Harfe South Circular Road
S Shannon Tie Limerick, IRELAND

In the daytime, the restaurant was all nonvampire; at night, vice-versa! The landlord collected double-rent (the lousy bloodsucker)! TANSTAAFCI (There etc! no such thing as a free comic!) -CK

You're genial. You're perfect. I love your comics and of course I love you, too. I'm sorry that my english sucks but I'm a 15 years young girl from Germany.

I'm one of your greatest fan (stiker). I think you looks very nice. I've got three questions to you. Do you teal real Love? Can I have an autograph from you or something like that? (Please.) Do you like all your fans? (I think the first question sounds silly, but this is serious.)

And I think your friends (Sorry friends) looks not very clever, too. But all your friends are my friends (friends).

Hey, CK! Can I talk with you a while? Eh, you're the only one with whom I can talk about my problems. My school sucks, and my parents suck, too. Sometimes I feel like a loser.

And sometimes I think there is no normal human on the earth, too. Oh, what can I do? The people in my village tease me every day. And tell lies about me. I feel so unhappy. Oh, eh, I think I get on your nerves with my long letter, don't I? OK, I say Good Bye!

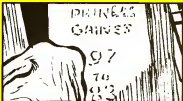
Stefanie Muller Bad Endbach, GERMANY

Although the enomymous editor fixed a few words in your letter, he left most of it intact to share the charm of your nescent English. I'm continually amazed by my foreign readers' English skills! (I know a little Spanish: "Dios cales, to vamoosel!")

I really love ell my lens. I will consider buying a pencil, so I can do autographs. How do you spell "CK"? -CK

in CRYPT 20, "The Handler" (last story), page 3, panel 7, there's a gravestone with the inscription "In Memory of _____ Ganes _97 to ____." What is the first name, it looks like it starts with the letter "p"? The date of birth must be '897 and the only number in the date of death that I can clearly read is the last number which appears to be a 3. I know that Bill's father Max died in the late 1940s in a boating accident and his mother was alive when the artwork was done. Who can shed light on this? Puzzled.

David DeLano Kensington, CT



Perhaps this photomicrograph will shed some light, and likely cause you to rethink your conclusions. A hint: see WEIRD SCIENCE 21, available now! -CK

I love your mag! It's so cool. I always go on the net and look for your web site. But the bad news is that issue '8 was my first mag. Can I have the mags '6 and '5? I promise if I get them I'll get all the mags you make. I'll buy back issues, too. Put my address down because I want a pen pal.

Matt Laney 428 Sunset RD
Skillman, NJ 08558

ATTENTION: CHARLES DRAGOO!

I am writing concerning Charles Dragoo who wrote in #18. I am a comic book artist who would like to illustrate CELLAR DWELLER. I am 13 years old. I've made 10 comic books, 3 of them horror books. I have collaborated with a writer on one of them: PSYCHO BILLY. Please print my address! I would like to get in contact with Charles Dragoo very much.

Brian Dishon #102 Matthew CIR
Huntington Beach, CA 92646

The stories [in CRYPT 19] offered a thought provoking progression family tree of undead: brother werewolf, sister vampire, voodooed wife, and, of course, a mummy (no relation to the scheming archeologists)!

This issue was originally available Apr/May 1953. When did MAD first use its "Humor in a Jugular Vein" motif? Is it fair to say that this was inspired by the scene where the hero of "Midnight Mess!" got tapped out in the vampire restaurant?

In "This Wraps It Up!", Professor Thomas Steel's patronym should have been Steel!

Issue 20. After perusing the verbose initial title, "Fare Tonight, Followed by Increasing Clottiness.", I debated weather or not to proceed. Fog goodness sake, I'm glad I did.

In "Curiosity Killed", the evidence was destroyed a smidgen per pigeon in "How Green Was My Alley", it was good to see a left-hander in action. Amy puffing.

Was naming the protagonist Mr. Benedict in "The Handler" a reference to Benedict Arnold? As an honored and trusted Revolutionary War colonel, his betrayal became thereby more heinous. Similarly with Satan, who was once the highest-ranking angel. Please print address.

Bob Gorby

8153 Sunny LN
Cermanlo, CA 93012

MAD #1 was released in October, 1952, but who says life is fair?
-CK

Ah! My new CRYPT just arrived and I must say, you didn't disappoint. Firstly, I would like to address some of the very kind people who mentioned me: The Crazy Corpse, Grizley Reaper, and most of all, Jessica Meador, to whom I dedicate this letter. Thank you for your support.

I personally don't think that either the Dark Demon or Blue Demon is Robert Borruso. Philip Smith, maybe, but not Borruso. Borruso had some interesting things to say, while Smith was just rather uptight about everything, going on incessantly about who CRYPT's No. 1 fan is, as if the fate of the world depended upon it. Robert Borruso's not like that.

Grave Digger, don't bother with the Demons. They're not worth the time or effort. By the way, I agree, "Horror We? How's Bayou?" was a wonderfully-drawn tale.

And so, on to the contents of [#19]:

"By The Fright Of The Silvery Moon!" Excellent, one of the ultimate classics. The cover depiction was absolutely stunning. "Midnight Mess!" The best story in the book, or at least I thought so. Perhaps, being a hardcore vampire addict, I'm biased. "Busted Marriage!" Sorry, not into the voodoo thing. Too many voodoo stories in the early issues. They do become rather tiresome. "This Wraps It Up!" This story was at least better than its title. It was better than I expected.

I'm shocked, astounded, and aghast and not in a good way, either! In CRYPT 20, which I received not five minutes ago, I see that you have printed my address as "Rockville, IL." I do not now live, nor have I ever lived, in Illinois (though it's a nice place to visit). My address is still RR 4 Box 141, Rockville IN 47872 and shall be for several years to come. Please rectify this error and hopefully, we can put this all behind us.

Now to address some other matters. Firstly, I would like to say to Grave Digger that there are no hard feelings. I've never been one to hold a grudge, especially against a person who is big enough to apologize. As of the time of this printing, Grave Digger, you have probably already received a letter from me stating this, but I would just like everyone else to now that there is peace between us.

As for the stories, "Fare Tonight" was excellent. I see your mag was plugged on pages two and seven. "How Green Was My Alley" was brilliant, the best story in the entire mag. Not to be outdone, Bradbury's "The Handler" was ingenious, as are all of his works. Ingels did a nice job on the artwork.

In closing, I say this: Buy "CRYPT: THE OFFICIAL ARCHIVES" It's worth its weight in plasma. Gravely yours,
Myron James
Rockville, IN

I miss Philip Smith, and hope he'll write again. Is the correct response to perceived uptightness more uptightness? I say nay!
-CK

NEXT ISSUE



Also available this month are WEIRD SCIENCE and PANIC. Watch for VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED next month. Don't forget HAUNT, FRONTLINE COMBAT and CRIME! Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic)!

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, SOLD OUT; FRONT #1-4, \$2 each, all others up thru issue #3, \$1.50 each, CRYPT, W SCI & SHOCK #4-18, and VAULT, W FAN, 2FIST, HAUNT and CRIME #4-15, \$2 each. All others, \$2.50 each. Latest issues CRYPT and W SCI are up to 21, VAULT, W FAN, 2FIST, HAUNT & CRIME are up to 20, FRONT to 9 and PANIC to 3.

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THIS COMIC REPRINTS

TALES FROM THE CRYPT #37* (#21, AUG/SEP 1953)

COVER by Jack Davis

"Dead Right!"

Jack Davis

"Reasant Screams!"

Joe Orlando

"Strop! You're Killing Me!"

Bill Elder

"The Rover Boys!"

Graham Ingels

We welcome letters of approval. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We will do so clearly, promptly and lengthily. We automatically withhold names and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. Periodicals may be used if you provide us with your accurate name and address. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters. To do so we need your address on the enclosed label.

HERE'S A TERROR TIDBIT TO WHET
YOUR DULLED FIENDISH APPETITES.

**STROP! YOU'RE
KILLING ME!**



OLD DAN HARPER WAS SITTING IN HIS USUAL WICKER ARM-CHAIR READING HIS USUAL DAILY PAPER AND SMOKING HIS USUAL CORN-COB PIPE WHEN THEY CAME INTO THE LYNDALE FIRE-HOUSE. HE LOOKED UP FROM HIS PAPER TO SEE GRIM-FACED MAYOR WITTER AND THE STRANGER IN THE BLUE UNIFORM WITH THE GOLD BUTTONS AND THE DAZZLING WHITE CAP...

AFTERNOON, MAYOR WITTER, IS THAT CLEM DUNLOP'S REPLACEMENT?

NOT EXACTLY, DAN. THIS IS LYNDALE'S NEW FIRE CHIEF! NOW THAT CLEM'S RETIRED, THE CITY COUNCIL'S DECIDED TO MODERNIZE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, SO WE HIRED MR. MILLER HERE... FRANK MILLER.

GLAD TO MEET YOU, DAN!



OLD DAN COULDN'T BELIEVE HIS EARS. FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS, HE AND CLEM DUNLOP HAD COMPRISED LYNDALE'S TWO-MAN FIRE DEPARTMENT. NOW THAT CLEM HAD RETIRED, OLD DAN HAD EXPECTED THE TOWN FATHERS TO HIRE A REPLACEMENT FOR HIM, BUT HE'D NEVER EXPECTED THEM TO HIRE SOMEONE WHO'D BE OLD DAN'S SUPERIOR...

NEW FIRE-CHIEF! BUT... I D DN'T UNDERSTAND! I'M SENIOR MEMBER NOW!

TIMES HAVE CHANGED, DAN. METHODS OF FIGHTING FIRES HAVE CHANGED TOO! CHIEF MILLER WILL BE IN FULL CHARGE FROM NOW ON. WHAT HE SAYS GOES! I'M... SORRY...



MAYOR WITTER TURNED TO CHIEF MILLER, SMILING...

WELL, SIR, THIS IS IT. LET ME SAY THAT ANY IMPROVEMENTS YOU WISH TO MAKE, THE COUNCIL WILL GLADLY CONSIDER. I HAVE TO GET BACK TO MY DESK, SO...

OF COURSE, MAYOR WITTER. GOOD AFTERNOON. AFTERNOON, MAYOR...



MAYOR WITTER LEFT AND LYNDALÉ'S NEW FIRE CHIEF LOOKED AROUND...

HMMMM WELL, DAN, WE'VE GOT A LOT OF WORK TO DO, SO LET'S GET MOVING...

WORK? WHAT KIND OF WORK?



CHIEF MILLER WAVED HIS HAND AT THE OLD FIRE-ENGINE.

FIRST OF ALL, WE'RE GOING TO PAINT AND POLISH THAT OLD ENGINE TILL SHE SPARKLES. IT'S IN TERRIBLE CONDITION! LOOK AT 'ER!

PAINT 'ER? POLISH 'ER? WHY? IS SHE GONNA FIGHT FIRES BETTER IF WE DO?



CHIEF MILLER'S FACE GREW VERY STERN... LOOK HERE, MR. HARPER, I'M IN CHARGE NOW, AND WHAT I SAY GOES! AND I SAY WE'RE GOING TO POLISH AND SHINE THAT FIRE-TRUCK... AND KEEP IT POLISHED!



NOT 'OKAY? YES, CHIEF! Y-YES... NOW, GO DOWN TO THE HARDWARE STORE AND GET TWO CANS OF BRASS POLISH, TWO CANS OF CHROME POLISH, TWO GALLONS OF RED PAINT, TWO BRUSHES, AND SOME RAGS...



OLD DAN HOBBLING OFF DOWN THE STREET TOWARD THE HARDWARE STORE... HMMMM. AFTER SEVENTEEN YEARS, THEY HIRE SOME YOUNG WHIPPER-SNAPPER WITH NEW-FANGLED IDEAS TO BOSS ME AROUND. HMMMM.



TWENTY MINUTES LATER HE RETURNED TO THE FIREHOUSE, HIS ARMS FILLED WITH PACKAGES...

HERE'S WHAT YOU WANTED, YOUNG FELLER! WHEW!

'CHIEF MILLER', IF YOU DONT MIND, MR. HARPER, WELL, LET'S GET TO WORK...

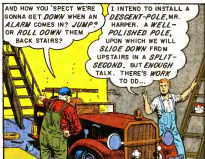


DAN LOOKED AROUND...

JUS' LEMME CATCH MY BREATH. LEMME SET FOR A SPELL IN MY...MY... SAY? WHERE IN BLAZES IS MY WICKER CHAIR?

I PUT IT UP-STAIRS, MR. HARPER. THEY'LL BE NO LOLLING AROUND DOWN HERE FROM NOW ON!

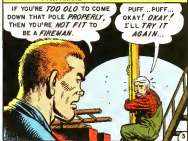




SO OLD DAN HARPER WAS FORCED TO WORK HIS HEART OUT FOR THE NEW CHIEF. HE POLISHED AND PAINTED TILL HIS OLD BONES ACHED. FOR THERE WERE TWO THINGS THAT H-D MEANT EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD TO DAN: HIS JOB IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND THE SMALL HOUSE JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN TO WHICH HE NOW RETURNED, EXHAUSTED, EACH NIGHT...



OLD DAN'S LITTLE HOUSE WAS HIS PRIDE AND JOY. AND HIS JOB WITH LYNDALE'S FIRE DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN HIS WHOLE LIFE. BUT NOW, CHIEF MILLER HAD COME UPON THE SCENE, AND OLD DAN'S JOB HAD BECOME A NIGHTMARE FOR HIM...



CHIEF MILLER MADE IT ROUGH ON OLD DAN. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HE CONSIDERED DAN TOO OLD FOR THE JOB AND WAS TRYING TO DISCOURAGE HIM... TO MAKE HIM QUIT. BUT OLD DAN WAS STUBBORN...



EVENIN', CHIEF MILLER.

YOU'RE *THREE MINUTES LATE*, MR. HARPER. I INSIST UPON *PUNCTUALITY* WHEN REPORTING FOR OUTFY!

SHUCKS, IT WAS SUCH A *NICE NIGHT*, I *WALKED* INTO TOWN.

WELL, *DON'T* LET IT HAPPEN *AGAIN*. DURING YOUR SHIFT TONIGHT, I WANT YOU TO *POLISH ALL THE BRASS*... UNDERSTAND?



ALTHOUGH LYNDALE'S FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS RARELY CALLED UPON BECAUSE OF ITS SMALL POPULATION (52, LAST CENSUS), CHIEF MILLER HAD INSTITUTED A TWO-SHIFT, TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR-A-DAY POLICY...



POLISH ALL THE BRASS? YES, SIR. EH...HOW'S YOUR *NEW HOUSE*, CHIEF MILLER?

VERY NICE. WELL, GOOD-NIGHT, MR. HARPER.

THERE WERE TIMES WHEN OLD DAN HAD THE URGE TO CHUCK THE WHOLE DEAL. THE CONSTANT PRESSURES EXERTED ON HIM BY THE NEW FIRE CHIEF CERTAINLY MADE HIM MISERABLE, BUT HE'D GRITTED HIS TEETH AND STUCK DOGGEDLY TO THE JOB...



I *WON'T* GIVE UP. I *WON'T*. NO YOUNG JOHNNY-COME-LATELY IS GOING TO MAKE ME TOSS AWAY A JOB I'VE HAD FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS. *WHERE'S THAT BLASTED POLISH*...

CHIEF MILLER FINALLY WENT TO SEE MAYOR WITTER...



FIRE-FIGHTING IS A *YOUNG MAN'S* PROFESSION, MAYOR. MR. HARPER IS *700 OLD*.

SORRY, CHIEF MILLER. I *COULDN'T* FIRE HIM.

LUT, HE'S A *HINDRANCE* MORE THAN A *HELP*. I'VE *TRIED* TO *DISCOURAGE* HIM...



IF HE *WON'T* QUIT, THEN YOUR JUST HAVE TO *KEEP* HIM ON TILL HE REACHES *RETIREMENT* AGE...

BUT THAT'S NOT FOR ANOTHER *FIVE YEARS!*

I *KNOW* THAT, CHIEF MILLER. MAYBE *YOU* CAN FIGURE OUT A WAY TO *CONVINCE* HIM...



IT WAS WHILE CHIEF MILLER WAS ON THE NIGHT SHIFT THAT THE ALARM CAME IN...

215 ELM. HURRY! THE ³HUR! OLD PLACE IS BLAZIN! ²DAN! OLD I THINK OLD DAN'S DAN HARPER! TRAPPED INSIDE... I'LL BE RIGHT THERE...



CHIEF MILLER LEAPED FROM HIS COT. THEN, HE STOPPED...

OF COURSE! WHAT AM I RUSHING FOR? NOW I CAN GET RID OF THAT OLD CODGER ONCE AND FOR ALL...



SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY, HE DRESSED IN HIS FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT...

HEH, HEH! TRAPPED... EH?



JUST BEFORE PUTTING ON HIS RUBBER BOOTS, THE CHIEF LIT A CIGARETTE...

THAT'S TOO BAD...



HE SMOKED A WHILE, THEN PUT THE CIGARETTE OUT AND DONNED HIS BOOTS...

I CAN KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE! I'LL SAY THE OLD FIRE-TRUCK WOULDN'T START!



HE SLID SLOWLY DOWN THE POLISHED DESCENT-POLE...

I'LL GET RID OF OLD DAN, AND I'LL CONVINCE THE TOWN COUNCIL THAT THEY NEED A NEW FIRE-TRUCK... BOTH AT THE SAME TIME!



CHIEF MILLER UNLOCKED THE HOOD OF THE FIRE-TRUCK AND GRINNED IN AT THE ENGINE...

I WONDER WHY IT WOULDN'T START... HEH, HEH...



THEN HE STROLLED TO THE FIRE-HOUSE DOORS AND SWUNG THEM OPEN...

WELL. THAT OUGHT TO DO IT! IT'S BEEN FIFTEEN MINUTES SINCE THE CALL CAME IN...



THE OLD FIRE-TRUCK LEAPED FROM THE FIRE-HOUSE, SIREN SCREAMING...

HEH, HEH...



WHEN THE FIRE-TRUCK FINALLY ARRIVED ON THE SCENE, OLD DAN'S HOUSE HAD BURNED TO THE GROUND WITH OLD DAN INSIDE IT...

I COULDN'T GET THE OLD ENGINE STARTED! IT WAS AWFUL...

HE... HE COULD'VE BEEN SAVED IF YOU'D GOTTEN HERE RIGHT AFTER I CALLED...



OF COURSE, NO ONE SUSPECTED CHIEF MILLER OF DELIBERATELY STALLING IN GETTING TO THE FIRE THAT HAD KILLED OLD DAN. THEY BELIEVED HIS STORY... AND A MONTH LATER, THE NEW FIRE-TRUCK ARRIVED...

HEH, HEH...



BUT ONE NIGHT, CHIEF MILLER RECEIVED ANOTHER ALARM. THE VOICE ON THE LINE WAS STRANGE... ALMOST LAUGHING...

71 BEECHTREE DRIVE... YES... WHAT A BLAZE! HURRY...

71 BEECHTREE DRIVE! WHY THAT'S MY HOUSE!



CHIEF MILLER DIDN'T STALL AROUND THIS TIME. THIS WAS AN EMERGENCY. HE LEAPED FROM HIS COT, AND DRESSED LIKE A DEMON.

THAT VOICE ON THE PHONE... IT SOUNDED FAMILIAR! WELL, I CAN'T WASTE TIME THINKING ABOUT THAT NOW...



HE RUSHED TO THE DESCENT-POLE, WRAPPED HIS ARMS AND LEGS AROUND IT, AND PLUMMETED DOWNWARD...

OH, LORD... I KNOW! I KNOW WHOSE VOICE THAT WAS! IT WAS HIS! OLD DAN HARPER'S! NO! NO, IT COULDN'T...



THE NEXT MORNING, THEY FOUND WHAT WAS LEFT OF CHIEF MILLER LYING BESIDE THE NEW FIRE-ENGINE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DESCENT-POLE IN A POOL OF DRYING BLOOD. HIS ARMS AND LEGS HAD BEEN SEVERED FROM HIS BODY AND HIS TORSO NEARLY SPLIT IN TWO. SOMEONE... OR SOMETHING... HAD REPLACED THE DESCENT-POLE WITH A STEEL STRIP SHARPENED TO A KEEN RAZOR-EDGE.



WHICH BRINGS MY TALE TO A CUTTING CLIMAX, EH, FIENOS? CAN YOU PICTURE SLICING DOWN A FIFTEEN-FOOT KNIFE BLADE? QUITE A STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION, EH? WASN'T THAT A GEM OF A YARN? I'LL RAZOR 'NOTHER ONE NEXT TIME WE MEET... IN Y.K.'S SHARP MAG, THE VAULT OF HORROR!

AND NOW, THE OLD WITCH AWAITS WITH HER HONE-COOKED YARN. 'BYE, NOWFOH, BY THE WAY, GILLETTE THE CAT OUT TONIGHT? 'BYE!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE. SMELL THE CONCOCTION I'M COOKIN' IN MY CRUDDY CAULDRON? IT'S A REEKING RECIPE OF REVOLTING REVELRY THAT I'M SURE YOU'LL ENJOY. THIS IS YOUR HOSTESS IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR, WAITING TO DISH OUT ANOTHER OF HER LURID LUNCHEONS. READY? THEN I'LL START FEEDING YOU THE FOUL FARE I CALL...

The ROVER BOYS!

PROLOGUE: THE DAWN SKY IS LIKE A GREY BLANKET HANGING LOW OVER THE STILL-SLEEPING CITY. HERE AND THERE A FEW STARS, RELUCTANT TO RETREAT FROM THE DAYLIGHT NOW BLOOMING IN THE EAST, TWINKLE FAINTLY AND THEN FADE. BELOW, THE STREET-LIGHTS STILL CAST DARK SHADOWS IN THE CANYONS BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS. A MILK WAGON CAREENS OVER THE COBBLE-STONES, ITS FRANTIC DRIVER UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTING TO HALT THE OLD HORSEWHO WHINNIES AND SNORTS, GALLOPING MADLY. FLASHING METAL-SHOOD HOOVES SPARK AGAINST THE PAVEMENT. A PACK OF STRAY DOGS, SLOBBERING AND YELPING, LEAP AND SCRAMBLE... NIPPING AND CLAWING AT THE DASHING HORSE. ITS FLANKS ARE SCARRED AND BLEEDING... ITS EYES FILLED WITH TERROR...



WNOA THERE, BOY! WNOA...



STORY: DOCTOR SHELDON REMSEN STOOD BEFORE THE FIVE GRIM-FACED MEMBERS OF THE STATE MEDICAL BOARD LISTENING TO THE CHAIRMAN'S COLD AND EXPRESSIONLESS VOICE MOUTHING THE WORDS THAT MEANT THE END OF EVERYTHING FOR HIM...

AND SO, DOCTOR REMSEN, IT IS THE DECISION OF THIS BOARD, IN VIEW OF THE EVIDENCES PRESENTED HERE OF CONDUCT UNBECOMING A MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, THAT YOUR LICENSE BE REVOKED AND THAT YOU BE BARRED FROM EVER PRACTISING MEDICINE AGAIN.

NO!
NO!



THE CHAIRMAN LOOKED AROUND, THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD ROSE SILENTLY AND FILED FROM THE ROOM. DR. SHELDON REMSEN LIFTED HIS HANDS IN A FINAL PLEADING GESTURE.

PLEASE! I BEG OF YOU... DON'T DO THIS TO ME. MEDICINE IS MY LIFE! PLEASE...



DR. REMSEN DARTED FORWARD. HE GLUTCHED AT THE SLEEVE OF THE LAST DEPARTING BOARD MEMBER...

WOULDN'T YOU RECONSIDER? I BEG YOU FOR LENIENCY! I MADE A MISTAKE! I'M SORRY! PLEASE.

THE DECISION OF THE BOARD IS FINAL, DR. REMSEN. IF YOU PLEASE...



DOCTOR REMSEN STOOD ALONE IN THE BOARD ROOM. FAINT LAUGHTER DRAFTED THROUGH THE DOOR BEYOND WHICH HIS JUDGERS AND CONDEMNERS HAD DISAPPEARED HE CURSED...

GO AHEAD, YOU RIGHTEOUS OLD W*#%\$!%\$! LAUGH! LAUGH AT ME! WE'LL SEE WHO HAS THE LAST LAUGH...



STRIPPED OF HIS PRIVILEGE TO PRACTISE MEDICINE, AND SPURNED BY HIS PROFESSION, DR. REMSEN WALKED SLOWLY FROM THE BOARD ROOM, ACROSS THE ECHOING FOYER OF THE MEDICAL BUILDING, AND OUT INTO THE WARM SUNLIGHT. HE FELT NAKED AND EXPOSED, AND HATE FILLED HIS HEART...

I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE! YOU'LL BE SORRY... ALL OF YOU!



HE MOVED UP THE CROWDED STREETS. HE WAS JOSTLED AND PUSHED AND CARRIED ALONG BY THE JABBING THROGS. BUT HE FELT AND HEARD NOTHING. DR. REMSEN'S MIND WAS FAR AWAY, PLANNING, DISCLAIMING, AND PLANNING AGAIN...

I HATE THEM! I'LL GET EACH OF THEM... ONE BY ONE! BUT HOW? HOW?



A SHADOW FELL ACROSS HIM, BLOCKING THE SUN. DR. REMSEN LOOKED AROUND. HE WAS UNDER A MARQUEE... A THEATER MARQUEE. THE COLORFUL BILLBOARD BLINKED AT HIM...

HMMM. 'CAPTAIN JOHN SMYTHE AND HIS TRAINED SEALS. SEE THEM PERFORM. THEY'RE ALMOST HUMAN!'



THE LAST LINE SCREAMED. THE WORDS SEEM TO LIGHT UP...

'THEY'RE ALMOST HUMAN!' OF COURSE...



THE DOCTOR SLID THE MONEY UNDER THE BOX-OFFICE GLASS AND HELD UP HIS INDEX-FINGER...



LAUGHTER ERUPTED FROM A HUNDRED MOUTHS AS HE MOVED SOFTLY DOWN THE CARPETED AISLE. ON-STAGE, A CLOWN WAS CAVORTING...



THE CLOWN SOMERSAULTED OFF INTO THE WINGS AMID CHEERS AND APPLAUSE. DR. REMSEN SAT DOWN...



THE CURTAIN WENT UP. THE GLIMMERING BLACK SEALS BARKED AND SWAYED. THEIR UNIFORMED TRAINER BEGAN THE ACT. DR. REMSEN'S GRIM MOUTH SLOWLY STRETCHED INTO A LEERING GRIN.



THE ACT WAS OVER. DR. REMSEN LEFT THE THEATER. HIS EVIL PLAN WAS FORMING IN HIS HATE-FILLED MIND...



THE PET SHOP SMELLED OF FLEA-POWDER AND ANIMAL SWEAT AND BIRD-SEED AND ECHOED WITH THE SQUEALS OF MONKEYS AND PARROTS AND THE HOWLING OF DOGS...



WE HAVE SOME FINE THOROUGHBRED BOXERS... OR WOULD YOU PREFER FRENCH-POODLES...



DOCTOR REMSEN'S LABORATORY WAS SILENT EXCEPT FOR THE OCCASIONAL WHINES OF THE DOGS THAT COVERED BEHIND THE WIRE MESH OF THE FIVE CAGES THAT LINED THE ROOM. THE DOCTOR WAS BUSY PLACING SHINY INSTRUMENTS INTO A STEAMING STERILIZER...

A KNOCK RESOUNDED THROUGH THE LABORATORY. THE DOGS BEGAN TO YELP. DOCTOR REMSEN WENT TO THE DOOR AND OPENED IT...

YOU! REMSEN!
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU LIVE NOW? BUT I THOUGHT...

YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE PAYING A HOUSE-CALL ON A SICK MAN, EH, DOCTOR HALE? THAT'S WHAT I WANTED YOU TO THINK!

SOON, MY LITTLE PETS. SOON NOW...



DOCTOR REMSEN WAIVED THE SMALL PISTOL AT THE SURPRISED BOARD-CHAIRMAN...

INSIDE, DOCTOR HALE! AND DON'T TRY ANYTHING. I WON'T HESITATE TO USE THIS...

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, REMSEN?



IT MEANS, MY DEAR CHAIRMAN OF THE MEDICAL BOARD, THAT I AM GOING TO TAKE MY REVENGE UPON YOU AND YOUR FELLOW BOARD-MEMBERS FOR HAVING EXCLUDED ME FROM YOUR PROFESSION!

YOU'RE MAD, REMSEN.



PERHAPS, DOCTOR HALE? AND NOW, IF YOU WILL REMOVE YOUR COAT, WE WILL GET ON WITH THE OPERATION.

OPERATION? WHAT, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?



DO? WHY, I AM GOING TO REMOVE YOUR BRAIN, DOCTOR, AND SUBSTITUTE IT FOR THE INADEQUATE BRAIN THAT NOW RESTS IN THE CRANIAL CAVITY OF ONE OF THOSE MISERABLE DOGS THERE!

REMSSEN! FOR GOD'S SAKE! PUT DOWN THAT HYPODERMIC!



OUTSIDE THE OLD HOUSE INTO WHICH DOCTOR REMSEN HAD MOVED HIS LABORATORY, THE WIND BISHED, CARRYING THE ECHO OF DOCTOR HALE'S SCREAM ACROSS THE DESERTED COUNTRYSIDE...



ON THE NIGHTS THAT FOLLOWED, ONE BY ONE, THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE STATE MEDICAL BOARD CAME TO THE LONELY HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY...

YOU'P
RENSEN?

WELCOME,
DOCTOR SIMPSON!

ONE BY ONE, THEY CAME... BUT NONE WENT AWAY. ON THE FIFTH MORNING, FIVE FRESH-DUG GRAVES LAY SILENTLY IN THE DAWN-LIGHT BEHIND THE HOUSE...



INSIDE, IN THE LABORATORY, FIVE DOGS WITH HUMAN BRAINS COVERED BEHIND THE MESH-WIRED DOORS OF THEIR KENNELS...

YOU WILL PERFORM AS YOU ARE BID, MY FRIENDS. EVEN IN YOUR ALIEN BOOIES, YOU STILL HAVE THE DESIRE TO SURVIVE...



AND YOU WILL SURVIVE SO LONG AS YOU COOPERATE! IF YOU DON'T... YOU WILL DIE! AND NOW... WE MUST BEGIN REHEARSING OUR ACT!



AND SO, SILENTLY, WITH TAILS BETWEEN THEIR LEGS, AND A GROWING HATE GLEAMING IN THEIR EYES, THE FIVE REMARKABLY INTELLIGENT CANINES WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF LEARNING THEIR FABULOUS ACT...

MY DEAR DOCTOR HALE. PERHAPS A DAY WITHOUT YOUR RATIONS WILL CONVINCE YOU THAT I MEAN BUSINESS! WHEN I CALL 'ROVER'... YOU BARK THE ANSWER... CORRECTLY!



FINALLY, THE TIME CAME. UNDER AN ASSUMED NAME, DR. SHELDON REMSEN MADE AN APPOINTMENT WITH A THEATRICAL AGENT AND PROUDLY AUDITIONED HIS ANIMAL ACT...

AMAZING, MR. SHELDON!
AMAZING! I'LL BOOK YOUR ACT IN EVERY VAUDEVILLE HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY! YOU'RE MADE...



AND SO, IN THE VERY SAME THEATER WHERE DR. SHELDON REMSEN HAD SEEN THE TRAINED SEALS THAT HAD GIVEN HIM HIS FANTASTIC AND DIABOLICAL SCHEME, SHELDON'S DOGS MADE THEIR THEATRICAL DEBUT...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THE GREATEST ANIMAL ACT TO EVER PERFORM UPON ANY STAGE. SHELDON'S INTELLIGENT DOGS, THEY COUNT... THEY SPELL... THEY DO EVERYTHING BUT TALK!



DR. REMSEN'S ANIMAL ACT GAINED IMMEDIATE SUCCESS. HIS AMAZING DOGS ASTOUNDED PEOPLE. DOGS COULD BE TRAINED TO APPEAR INTELLIGENT, BUT HIS...



YOUR QUESTION, SIR?

WHAT YEAR DID COLUMBUS DISCOVER AMERICA?

THE DOGS ACTUALLY PICKED OUT CARDS CONTAINING THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO MATHEMATICAL PROBLEMS, HISTORICAL DATES...



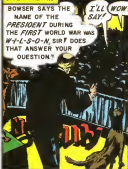
1492! QUITE CORRECT, ROVER!

AMAZING!

INCREDIBLE!

BRAVO!

THE DOGS MANIPULATED ALPHABET BLOCKS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS GIVEN THEM...



BOWSER SAYS THE NAME OF THE PRESIDENT DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR WAS W-T-L-S-O-N, SIR? DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?

I'LL WOW! SAY!

FINALLY, DUE TO THE GRUELLING SCHEDULE OF TRAVELLING THE VAUDEVILLE CIRCUITS, DR. REMSEN RETURNED TO HIS LONELY HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN FOR A BRIEF VACATION.



HEH, HEH! WELL, MY LITTLE PETS! THANKS TO YOU, I AM GETTING RICHER EACH DAY!



SOON, I WILL BE READY TO RETIRE! OH IT WILL BE SUCH A SHOCK TO THE THEATRICAL WORLD WHEN YOU ARE ALL DESTROYED IN AN UNFORTUNATE FIRE!

THE NIGHT THAT DOCTOR REMSEN MADE HIS STARTLING PRONOUNCEMENT AS TO THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN-BRAINED CANINES, HE CARELESSLY LEFT ONE OF THE WIRE-MESH KENNEL DOORS UNLOCKED, AFTER HE'D RETIRED, A SLEEK FORM MOVED FROM KENNEL TO KENNEL, UNLOCKING THE OTHER DOORS...



DOCTOR REMSEN HAD BEEN RIGHT. THE DESIRE TO SURVIVE WAS INDEED STRONG... EVEN FOR IMPRISONED HUMAN BRAINS. A LOW GROWL AWAKENED THE DOCTOR AND HE SAT UP IN BED STARING INTO FIVE PAIRS OF BLAZING EYES...



NO! OH, LORD, NO...

ONE OF THE REMARKABLE DOGS HELD A HYPODERMIC IN ITS Slobbering MOUTH...

TOWARD MORNING, AN OLD HORSE ON A NEAR BY FARM WAS ATTACKED BY A PACK OF YELPING WILD DOGS AND DRIVEN TOWARD THE OLD HOUSE...

AND DAWN FOUND A SIXTH GRAVE ADDED TO THE SILENT FIVE...



THE FARMER WHO OWNED THE HORSE FOUND IT WANDERING MILES FROM THE FARM THE NEXT DAY...

AND FIVE DOGS WERE SEEN OFTEN IN LATER WEEKS, YELPING AND RACING THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CITY...

THE MILK COMPANY RECEIVED NUMEROUS COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE NEW HORSE FROM ITS DRIVER...

THERE YOU ARE, BOY! GET ALONG HOME NOW. THAT MILK COMPANY MAN'S COMIN' TO BUY YOU!



CRAZY, THAT'S WHAT HE IS. ALWAYS SMORTIN' AND WHINNYIN' AND STAMPIN' HIS HOOF'S... LIKE HE WERE TRYIN' TO TELL ME SOMETHIN'!



EPILOGUE: THE DAWN SKY IS LIKE A GREY BLANKET. A MILK-WAGON CAREENS OVER THE COBBLESTONES, ITS HORSE GALLOPING MADLY. A PACK OF STRAY DOGS... FIVE OF THEM... Slobbering and barking... LEAP AND SCRAMBLE, NIPPING AND CLAWING AT THE FRENZIED ANIMAL. ITS FLANKS ARE SCARRED AND BLEEDING... ITS EYES FILLED WITH TERROR. AND THE YELPING DOGS SEEM TO BE LAUGHING AT IT...



WHOA THERE, BOY! WHOA!

HEE, HEE! SO DOC REMSEN, CAUSE HE HORSED AROUND WITH BRAINS, ENDED UP WITH HIS IN ONE. WELL, KIDDIES, NEXT TIME YOU SEE A PACK OF HOWLIN' MUTTS CHASIN' AN OLD HORSE UP THE STREET, THINK OF THIS TERROR-TIDBIT I'VE JUST FED YOU. DON'T LAUGH! THEY MIGHT BE THE STATE MEDICAL BOARD HOUNDING DOCTOR SHELDON



REMSEN! HEE, HEE. WELL, THAT ABOUT WINDS UP G.K.'S MAG. I'LL BE COOKIN' AGAIN IN THE VAULT OF HORROR! 'BYE, NOW.

TERROR



NO. 38
OCT. - NOV.

TALES



10¢

FROM THE

CRYPT

FEATURING



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER





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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH... WELL, ALL I CAN SAY IS... YOU'RE EITHER **FANS** OR **FRIENDS** FOR PLUNKIN' DOWN GOOD U.S. CURRENCY FOR THIS REERING RAG. IN ANY CASE - **GREETINGS SHOULD!** WELCOME ONCE MORE TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR... TO THE HORRID PAGES OF THIS... THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAG. I'M READY TO START OFF THE EVIL FESTIVITIES WITH AN ODD TALE TOLD TO ME BY AN ODD TELLER OF ODD TALE... A TRUNK. LISTEN, NOW, TO THE STEAMER'S OWN **BORCAL-STORY**, WHICH IT CALLS...

TIGHT GRIP!



THE LAYERS OF DIRT THAT HAD SETTLED UPON ME OVER THE YEARS HAVE BEEN SCRUBBED AWAY, AND NOW I LIE UPON WILMA'S BEDROOM FLOOR, MY LID FLUNG WIDE, DAWNING HAPPILY AND SWALLOWING THE NEATLY FOLDED CLOTHES SHE IS BUSILY PACKING INTO MY INSIDES. I FEEL CLEAN AND FRESH AND NEW AND ALIVE AGAIN AFTER LYING DEAD FOR SO LONG IN THE GLEET LITTERED ATTIC. AND THERE IS A JOY WITHIN ME THAT MIRRORS WILMA'S JOY. FOR TODAY, WILMA IS TO BE MARRIED...

TUM-TA-DEE-DEE-THE-OFF-DEE-DEE
DRY-ICE, FEEVES, WHAT IS IT?

MR. ROXBELL IS
HERE, MISS WILMA.



WILMA IS LIKE A **CHILD** AGAIN AS SHE FLITS ABOUT HER BEDROOM SMILING HAPPILY... THE CHILD I **KNEW** WHO USED TO STEAL UP TO THE ATTIC WHEN WE WERE **BOYF** TO **POOR** AND FEEL **SAFE** IN ME AND FINGER THE OLD LACE AND GLASS THAT HAD BEEN STORED IN ME AND FORGOTTEN...

CARL? OH... HE'S **EARLY?** I'M NOT EVEN **READY!** SHOW HIM **MY** **JEWELS**...

YES, MA'AM



YES, I AM AND I **TRUST** I WAS WITH WILMA'S **PARENTS** ON **THEIR** **HONEYMOON** I **WAS** **AWAY**, THEN AND I CARRIED THEIR **BELOVEDS** WHEN THEY MOVED **HERE**... TO **THIS** **HOUSE** AND THEN I WAS **PUT** **AWAY**, UP **THERE**, WHERE ALL I COULD DO WAS **WAIT** AND **LISTEN** AND **HOPE** **FOR** **OLD**...

CARE, CARLINE...

WILMA, MY **PET**



I HEARD MANY THINGS WHILE I LAY THERE SAVORING DUST IN MY ATTIC GRAVE. I HEARD THE **LUSTY** CRY OF THE NEW-BORN INFANT NAMED WILMA. I HEARD HER CHILDISH VOICE AS SHE SCAMPERS ABOUT DOWNSTAIRS AND I SAW HER WHEN SHE CAME TO ME AND PLAYED WITH ME AND LAUGHED GAILY.

ALMOST **PACKED** WILMA, DEAR?

ALMOST, CARL...



AND I LOVED HER. EVEN **AFTER** SHE'D **GROWN** AND NO LONGER **CAME** TO ME AND SEARCHED MY **COFFERS** AND TRIED ON MY **SHAWLS** AND **DRESSES** AND **SCARVES**. I LOVED HER. EVEN WHEN ALL I COULD DO WAS **LIE** THERE AND **LISTEN** TO HER... **BELONG**... LISTEN TO HER **FOOTSTEPS** GROW **HEAVY** WITH THE **YEARS**, AND HER **MOTHER'S** AND **FATHER'S** **FOOTSTEPS** **DIS-** **APPEAR** WITH THEIR **DEATHS**...

I'VE CALLED **THE** **JUSTICE** OF THE **PEACE** AND HE'S **WAITING** FOR US. THE **RESERVATIONS** AT THE **MOTEL** ARE **SET**...

OH, CARL. I'M SO **NERVOUS!** I CAN **SCARCELY** **FACE**...



AND I FELT HER **YOUTH** PASS AS SHE FELT IT PASS. AND I **PRAYED** AS SHE **PRAYED**... THAT SHE WAS **NOT** DESTINED TO A... LIFE OF **LONGEVITY**... THAT SHE WOULD **MEET** SOMEONE AND HE WOULD **LOVE** HER TO BE HIS **WIFE**. AND **NOW** OUR **PRAYERS**, WILMA'S AND MINE, HAD COME **TRUE!**...

HERE... LET ME! YOU DO **NOT** **NEED** ME! I'LL **FINISH** UP...

YES, OH, DEAR... I **HOPE** I HAVEN'T **FORGOTTEN** ANYTHING...



JUST **ONE** **THING** THOUGH... ONE THING THAT **BOthers** ME... ONE THING THAT **SPOILS** THE **JOY** I FEEL... **THIS** **MAN**... **THIS** **CARL** **ROOSEVELT**... **THIS** **MAN** WHO EVEN **NOW** ANXIOUSLY STUFFS THE **LAST** FEW **ARTICLES** OF WILMA'S **NEARLY**-PURCHASED **TROUSERS** INTO ME. I AM **AFRAID** OF **THIS** **MAN**...

ARE **YOU** **READY** TO **GO**, WILMA?

READY, CARL?



I FEEL HIS **ROUGH** HANDS UPON MY **LIP**, **SLAMMING** IT **DOWN**, AND I **WHISPER**... **NOT** WITH **FAITH**, **NOT** FROM **THE** **HOUSE**... I **WHISPER** WITH **FEAR**. THERE IS SOMETHING **ABOUT** **THIS** **MAN**. SOMETHING... **FEARFUL**...

LET'S **GO**, THEN...

YOU **RARE**, DEAR?

CARRY MY **TRUNKS** OUT TO THE **CAR**, **JEVEE!**



NOW JEEVES IS COMING TOWARD ME AND I FEEL MYSELF BEING LIFTED AND CARRIED...

"HELLO, JEEVES?"

"NOT VERY, MA'AM."

AND SUDDENLY I FEEL THE WARM SUN UPON ME FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIRTY-NINE YEARS...

"JUST TELL IT ON THE BACK SEAT THERE, JEEVES."

"YES, MR. NORWELL..."

AND AS CAR DOOR SLAM AND THE MOTOR ROARS, I SMILE HAPPILY, MY FEARS FORGOTTEN...

"GOOD-BYE, JEEVES."

"GOOD-BYE, MISS WILMA, GOOD LUCK! HAVE A HAPPY HONEYMOON..."

I SIT CONTENTELY, FEELING OF THE SILK AND LACE AND FLUENT THINGS INSIDE ME AND THE WIND UPON ME AS WE SPEED SOUTH... WILMA, AND I, AND THE SUN...

"HAPPY, DARLING?"

"VERY..."

AND THEN WE STOP AND WILMA AND CARL LEAP FROM THE CAR AND HURRY, SIGGLING UP A FLOWERED WALK, AND I SEE THE SIGN AND HEAR THE WELCOMING VOICE OF THE JUDGE OF THE PEACE...

"RIGHT ON TIME. COME IN. COME IN..."

I WAIT, DREAMING, AND AFTER A WHILE WILMA AND CARL COME OUT, AND THERE IS A BAND OF GOLD ON WILMA'S THIRD FINGER OF HER LEFT HAND AND I KNOW THAT SHE AND THE MAN ARE HUSBAND AND WIFE...

"GOD BLESS YOU, AND THE BEST OF LUCK TO YOU BOTH..."

"THANKS"

"BYE"

AND NOW IT'S EVENING, AND THE SKY GROWS DARK. WE PULL OFF THE HIGHWAY INTO A ROAD LEADING TO A VINE-COVERED HOTEL... WILMA AND CARL'S HONEYMOON HOTEL...

"IT'S A DARLING SPOT, CARL?"

"I'M DEAD YOU LIKE IT, WILMA?"

STRANGE HANDS PULL ME FROM THE CAR, CARRY ME ACROSS THE HOTEL LOBBY, AND DROP ME TO THE FLOOR BEFORE THE ELEVATOR, AND I LISTEN TO THE SCRATCHING OF THE PEN AS CARL REGISTERS...

MR. AND MRS. CARL POTWELL, LOOKS GOOD, IS, HONEY?

IT LOOKS WONDERFUL, DARLING...



NOW WE ARE ALONE... WILMA AND I AND CARL... ALONE IN THIS HOTEL SUITE, AND SUDDENLY THAT FEAR IS BACK AGAIN, THAT FEAR OF THIS MAN WHO HAD TAKEN MY WILMA AS HIS BRIDE...

FWOOP, DEARY...

HEEY...



WILMA'S NERVOUS FINGERS LIFT MY LID AND SHE PUMMERS THROUGH ME, LIFTING OUT HER FINEST GOWN. FOR THIS IS THE NIGHT WE'RE BOTH BREAKING... WILMA'S PLEDGING NIGHT...

WILMA?

YES, CARL? WHAT?



CARL STANDS BEFORE WILMA, THE GLEAMSING AND THAT SETS JUST TAKEN FROM HIS BRID IN HIS HAND...

CARE? THAT SET?

I'M GOING TO MARRY YOU, WILMA...



CARL! YOU'RE JOKING!

YOU'RE A FOOL, WILMA! DID YOU REALLY THINK I COULD LOVE YOU? DID YOU? YOU'RE ALMOST FORTY I'M TWENTY-SEVEN IT WASN'T LOVE, WILMA! IT WAS YOUR MONEY.



I PLANNED ALL THIS, WILMA PLANNED IT CAREFULLY. YOU'RE GOING TO GET SORE, BE CONFINED TO YOUR ROOM, AND ALL THE WHILE, I'LL BE GETTING RID OF YOUR BODY PIECE BY PIECE. AND WHEN IT'S ALL BEEN DISPOSED OF, I'M GOING TO SAY YOU RAN AWAY... THAT WHEN I WAKE UP, YOU WERE GONE... AND THE POLICE WILL LOOK FOR YOU AND THEY WON'T FIND YOU... AND YOUR MONEY WILL BE MINE...



THE ARE BLAZE CUTS WILMA'S SCREAM FOR HELP SHORT AS CARL BRINGS IT DOWN UPON HER BLANCHED FACE...

NO, CARL! NO! YAA... FOOH...

HEE, WILMA



I AM EMPTY NOW. CARL HAS STRIPPED ME OF MY CONTENTS... THE NEWLY-FURNISHED LINEN... THE SHOES... THE DRESSES. I LIE BESIDE THE BATH-ROOM DOOR, MY LID WIDE, WAITING... LISTENING IN HORROR AS CARL DISMEMBERS WILMA'S BODY WHERE HE'S CARRIED IT. IN THE TUB.



THERE IS A SADNESS IN ME SOMEWHERE... DEEP IN THE WOODGRAINS, IN THE METAL REINFORCEMENTS, IN THE LEATHERNETS THAT COVER ME... THERE IS A CRYING, AND A SADNESS AND AN ANGER. I FEARED THIS MAN, I FEARED FOR WILMA, NOW SHE LIES DEAD, BEING RENT ASUNDER BY THIS MAD MANIAC. SUDDENLY, I DESPISE HIM... DESPISE HIM WITH EVERY NUT AND SCREW IN MY BODY...



I RECALL AS THE DISMEMBERED SECTION OF WILMA'S ONE PRIDE BODY DROPPED INSIDE ME, AND I FEEL ITS SOFTNESS AND THE FLUID THAT FLOWS FROM IT. I BLAM MY LID DOWN IN FRIGHT AND LOATHING AND...



AND SUDDENLY, AND MY SADNESS, THERE IS GLEE. I HAVE HURT THE MADMAN WHO HAS TAKEN MY LOVED ONE FROM ME. I CAN HURT HIM AGAIN...



ANOTHER PART OF WILMA IS TOSSED WITHIN ME AND AGAIN I BLAM MY LID SHUT UPON HIS CURSED BLOODY PAN...



NOW CARL HAS JAMMED A STICK INTO MY MOUTH... FORGING MY LID TO STAY OPEN... PREVENTING ME FROM HURTING HIM. BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS. I WILL WAIT. HE FILLS ME WITH WILMA'S SEVERED REMAINS AND I ENRAGE THEM LOVINGLY...



I LIE LOCKED, WAITING... THE SLIM STICK INSIDE ME. I LISTEN AS CARL, PLOGGED DOWN TO THE DEER...



CARL IS *BLEEPER*... *VERY* BLEEPER. HE HAS TAKEN FELLOWS AND LAID THEM HEARTY UPON THE BED AND COVERED THEM WITH BLANKETS SO THAT IT APPEARS AS IF *WILMA* LIES THERE.

YOUR DINNER, MR. ROSWELL... Oh, THANK YOU DEAR, MRS. ROSWELL IS ASLEEP IN THERE.



AND EVERY SO OFTEN, HE COMES TO ME AND UNLOCKS ME AND REMOVES A DIGNIFIED SECTION OF WILMA'S BODY AND WHIPS IT CAREFULLY IN THE PAPER HE'S BROUGHT FOR THE PURPOSE AND GOES OUT FOR A *WALK*!

LOSER! GEE, MY ROSWELL, HOW'S MRS. ROSWELL? MUCH BETTER, REMEMBER, SHE'S *NOT* TO BE *DIS-TURBED*!



AND *NO ONE* SUSPECTS THE TRUTH... ONLY I KNOW THE GRISLY TRUTH. THE DAYS PASS, THE PARTS INSIDE ME ARE SLOWLY *DISAPPEARING*, AND I GROW *DESPERATE*, I MUST *INVENT* THIS FIB, *EXPOSE* MY

SELF, TIME FOR ANOTHER *WALK*! I'LL... I'LL... WHAT THE...



CARL STRUGGLES WITH THE LOCK BUT I HAVE JAMMED IT WELL, HE CURSES, KICKS ME.



OPEN, BLAST YOU...

WHAP

BUT MY LOCK HOLDS FAST, AND NOW CARL IS *DESPERATE*. THIS WILL CALL FOR A *CHANGE* OF PLAN. I LISTEN AS HE PHONES.



ER, *DESP* Oh, WILL YOU SEND UP A *BOY*? MY WIFE IS FEELING BETTER NOW AND WE'LL BE CHECKING OUT IN THE MORNING. WE HAVE A *TRUNK* UP HERE WE'D LIKE TO SEND ON AHEAD...

THE BELLBOY ARRIVES WITH HIS DOLLY, AND I FEEL MYSELF LIFTED AND FEEL WILMA'S DIED AND RIGID BEHIND ME WITHIN ME.

TAKE IT DOWN TO THE EXPRESS OFFICE, SON. HERE'S THE ADDRESS IT GOES TO... YES, SIR...



AND NOW I AM BEING WHEELED OUT OF THE ELEVATOR... ACROSS THE CROWDED LOBBY, THIS IS WHAT I PLANNED. THIS IS WHAT WILL EXPOSE MY LOVED ONE'S MURDERER. I SNAP OPEN MY LOCK... *STRAPE* WHO MY LIFE...



WATCH IT! Oh... WHAT THE... GOOD LORD! CHUCK!

THE LOBBY OF THIS PLEASANT HOMETOWN HOTEL REVERBERATES WITH SCREAMS AS I SPILL FORTH MY BLOOD-STAINED SORRY CONTENTS UPON THE PULCHRY CARPETED FLOOR.



AND UP ABOVE, CARL HEARS THE SCREAMS AND KNOWS THAT THE TRUTH IS OUT THAT HIS HORROROUS DEEDS HAS BEEN DISCOVERED, AND HE MAKES HIS EXIT...



I BETTER GET OUT OF HERE...

AND NOW IT IS FOUR YEARS LATER. ONCE MORE I LIE IN DARKNESS GATHERING DUST...



I LIE IN A WAREHOUSE WHERE THE POLICE HAVE STORED ME UNTIL THEY CAN CATCH CARL AND BRING HIM TO TRIAL AND PUT ME UP AS 'EVIDENCE'.



I LIE THROUGH THE YEARS AND I WAIT. BUT NO ONE COMES FOR ME, NO ONE COMES TO TAKE ME OUT INTO THE SUNLIGHT, AND I GROW ANGRY AND HUNGER FOR REVENGE... ME AND WILMA'S REVENGE.



SHUT UP, YOU FOOL. THIS WAY.

WHAT A WALL.

VOICES, VOICES IN THE DARKNESS, AND ONE VOICE IS FAMILIAR. TWO SHADOWS WITH GLEAMING FLASHLIGHTS MOVE TOWARD ME WHERE I LIE AMONG WARDROBES OF MEN COATS AND BOXES OF STOLEN ARTICLES THAT THE POLICE HAVE RECOVERED AND ARE HOLDING FOR THEIR CLAIMANTS.



I TOLD YOU WE'D FIND PLENTY IN HERE, CARL.

YEAH?

THAT NAME. THAT VOICE. FOR FOUR YEARS I HAVE WAITED, STILL FEELING WILMA'S GORY REMAINS WITHIN ME. STILL HATING, STILL PRAYING FOR REVENGE. AND NOW, CARL ROSSWELL IS HERE. BESIDE ME. I BRUDDER.



WHAT THE.

LOOK OUT, I

THE BONES POLED UPON ME TUMBLING WITH A CLATTER TO THE FLOOR. SOMEWHERE A VOICE CALLS OUT.



I FEEL ROUGH HANDS UPON MY LID. FAMILIAR ROUGH HANDS... CARL'S HANDS. HE SWINGS ME OPEN, STEPS INTO ME, AND I SWALLOW HIM GRIEDELTY.



HE BRINGS THE LID DOWN... CRASHING TALESNTLY... INSIDE ME. LISTENING.



THE FOOTSTEPS DISAPPEAR. CARL TRIES TO OPEN THE LID. BUT I HAVE HIM NOW. I WON'T LET HIM GO. I AM MY LOCK... LISTENING TO HIM STRUGGLE.



BUT WILLY DOESN'T ANSWER. WILLY HAS RUN OFF, LEAVING CARL TO HIS FATE. CARL GAGS. THE AIR GROWS THIN. FINALLY, IN DESPERATION HE PULLS HIS GUN... FIRING IT THROUGH MY SIDES...



AND NOW I TAKE MY REVENGE. I BREATHE DEEP AND THEN EXHALE. I EXHALE ALL OF THE HATE AND LOATHING AND DESIRE FOR REVENGE WITHIN ME. AND I LEAN IN, MY SHOULDERS CLOSE DOWN AND MY TOP SPINES BUCK DOWN AND I GROW SMALL AND CARL SCREAMS UNTIL HE CAN NOT SCREAM ANY MORE AND HIS FLESH OODLES FROM THE GUILLET HOLES LIKE JELLY FROM A SAKER'S DECORATING BAG. AND WHEN THEY COME, THEY FIND ME... A TINY BOX WITH A MOLD OF COMPRESSED BONE INSIDE ME AND A THOUSAND YARDS OF FLESH-FIBER AROUND ME...



HEH-HEH. YES, KIDDOS. WILMA'S OLD TRUCK SHUT CARL UP ALL RIGHT, ANYBODY CARE FOR A FOOT SQUARE BONE CUBE? IF YOU COULD FIND A MATE FOR IT, YOU COULD MAKE 'EM WITH SPOTS AND HAVE A *ALLOT* OF A *SHAP* GAME. NOT MY *SHAY*. I'LL USE IT AS A PAPER-WEIGHT TO HOLD DOWN BY NEXT TAPR TILL WE MEET AGAIN LATER ON IN MY MUCK MAN. RIGHT NOW, THE *MAKUP* *KEEPER* SMIRKS WITH *JOB* OFFERING. I'LL BE *SHOVELING* OFF. TILL WE REEY AGAIN 'BYE!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WELCOME YEP, CREEPY. IT'S YOUR SCREAM-STORY TELLER IN THE VAULT OF HORROR, THE FAMEL-KEEPER, READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH ONE OF MY CREEPY COLLECTOR'S ITEMS. FOR MY SPOT IN S.K.'S LAB... MAF, I HAVE CHOSEN A BAT TALE OF MARCH BRAD MORBIDITY ENTITLED...

...ONLY SKIN DEEP!

HERBERT HAD MADE UP HIS MIND. THIS WOULD BE THE LAST TIME HE WOULD COME TO NEW ORLEANS FOR MARCH BRAD WALK AND SET IN THIS CROWDED CAFE... WHERE HE'D FIRST MET SUZANNE... AND WAIT FOR HER. THIS WOULD BE THE LAST LONELY YEAR HE'D SPEND, DREAMING THROUGH THE SPRING AND SUMMER AND FALL UNTIL FEBRUARY ROLLED AROUND AGAIN AND HE'D PUSH SOUTH FOR ONE HEAVENLY WEEK. YEP, *THE SCARF* WAS LONG ENOUGH. THIS TIME HE WOULD ASK SUZANNE TO MARRY HIM... HE SAT SILENTLY WAITING HIS SPINE, SEARCHING THE MASKED, COSTUMED THROTTLE FOR SUZANNE'S FAMILIAR FIGURE. AND THEN SHE WAS COMING TOWARD HIM, OUT OF THE HELLFIRE AND MADNESS...



SUZANNE... DARLING...

HERBERT...



AND NOW THEY WERE IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS, AND HE WAS HOLDING HER CLOSE AND FEELING HER DOWNY WARMTH AND HIS YEAR-LONG DREAM WAS A REALITY ONCE MORE...

SUZANNE... SUZANNE... I THOUGHT ABOUT YOU EVERY DAY... EVERY MINUTE... I MISSED YOU SO...

OH, HERBERT... A YEAR IS SUCH A LONG TIME... NOW YOU'VE YOU BEEN...



HERBERT STARED INTO SUSANNE'S EYES... DANCING EYES, THAT SMILED AT HIM FROM BEHIND THE RUBBER MASK SHE WORE. THE SAME MASK SHE'D WORN EVERY YEAR... THE SAME SHE'D WORN WHEN THEY FIRST MET, FIVE YEARS AGO...

HOW HAVE I BEEN, HERBIE? I'VE BEEN SO GOOD... I'VE BEEN SO GOOD ABOUT YOU. I WON'T LET YOU GO THIS TIME, SUE. I WON'T LET YOU GO... EVER AGAIN.

WELL, MY SWEET, WE HAVE A WHOLE WONDROUS FUL YEAR AHEAD OF US...



I DON'T WANT A WEEK, DON'T FALF, MOMENT. I WANT NEXT YEAR. AND THE YEAR AFTER THAT... A WHOLE LIFE - FINE TOGETHER!

DON'T FALF, MOMENT. DON'T SAY ANYTHING, NOW. DANCE WITH ME...



HERBERT FOLLOWED SUSANNE TO THE CROWDED DANCE FLOOR. BEHIND HIS OWN MASK, HE COULD FEEL HIS FACE. I KNOW NOW... THE PERSPIRATION FLOWING. HE HELD HER CLOSE, WRAPPING...

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, THERE'S NOTHING ELSE. LET'S GO SOME PLACE WHERE IT'S QUIET... WHERE WE CAN TALK...

TO TALK ABOUT, HERE, IS THERE?



HE LOOKED AT HER... BLUETING IT OUT...

I WANT TO ASK YOU TO MARRY ME, SUE...

HERBIE...

ARE YOU SURE, HERBIE, DEAR? SUPPOSE SOMEONE THIS MASK, I WAS NOT AS YOU PICTURE ME. SUPPOSE I WAS...

YOU'LL NEVER BE ANYTHING BUT BEAUTIFUL TO ME, SUE, NO MATTER WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE IT DOESN'T EVEN MATTER...



THIS WASN'T THE WAY HE'D PLANNED IT AT ALL! NOT HERE ON THIS JAMMED DANCE FLOOR IN THIS NOISY SMOKEY CAFE. HERBERT HAD DREAMED OF A QUIET SPOT ALONG THE LAKE BENEATH MOSS-LADEN OAKS UNDER TREES... A ROMANTIC PLACE... TO PROPOSE. BUT NOW IT WAS OUT... AND DONE...

YOU... YOU REALLY WANT TO MARRY ME, HERBERT... WITH-OUT EVEN KNOWING WHAT I LOOK LIKE...?

I KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU, SUE... AND THAT YOU LOVE ME. THAT'S WHAT'S IMPORTANT.

THEY'D STOPPED DANCING NOW, SUE AND HERBERT. THEY STOOD THERE, STARING INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES, JOSTLED BY THE BAY CROWD...

OH, HERBIE, I'VE WAITED FIVE YEARS FOR YOU TO SAY THAT...

WE'VE WASTED SO MUCH TIME, MY SWEET. I'VE WANTED TO SAY IT FOR FIVE YEARS...



AND NOW THE MADNESS AND THE NOISE AND THE MURMURING WERE FAR BEHIND, OVERHEAD, STARS PEERED THROUGH BOWED CYPRASSES, AND THE LAKE WAS A MIRROR OF BLACK...



NOW THAT WE'RE AWAY FROM THE CROWDS AND THE DIN... ASK ME AGAIN...

MARRY ME, SUE. I LOVE YOU.

SHE CAME INTO HIS ARMS AND HE COULD SEE THAT HER EYES WERE FILLING WITH TEARS.



YES, DARLING. I'LL MARRY YOU... GLADLY...

SUE? SWEET? LET ME KISS YOU...

HE REACHED FOR HER HAIR... TO LIFT IT AWAY... SO HE COULD TOUCH HER LIFE WITH HIS. SHE GRABED HIS HAND...



NO, HORRIBLE? DON'T YOU SAID IT DIDN'T MATTER...

IT DOESN'T, HONEY. I JUST WANT TO KISS YOU...



MARRY ME FIRST, HERBIE, THEN WE CAN UNMASK WHEN WE HAVE OUR LOVE COMPLETE.

HOW?? TOMORROW??



WE COULD RENT A CAR... DRIVE UPSTATE, WE COULD FIND A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE...

LET'S GO...

THEY RAN, HAND IN HAND... LIKE CHILDREN, AND SOON NEW ORLEANS WAS JUST A DRY GLOW TO THE SOUTH, AND THEY WERE MARRIED UPSTATE IN A RENTED CAR... LIKE TWO PHANTOMS...



THERE, DARLING? THERE'S A BOSS...

A.M. MOORE, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, MARRIAGES PERFORMED, NO WAITING. 'THIS IS IT'.

THE OLD J.P. PERFORMED THE CEREMONY WITH RAISED EYEBROWS. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HE'D EVER MARRIED A COUPLE WHOSE FACES HE DID NOT SEE, BUT THEN... IT WAS MADE! SOAS WILL...



I NOW PRODUCE YOU MAN AND WIFE...

LATER... THE SMALL HOTEL... THE GRINNING BELL-BOY CARRYING THEIR HASTILY PACKED BAGS... LEADING THE NEWLYS TO THEIR ROOM...

UP FROM NEW ORLEANS, ENT?

YES... WE WERE JUST MARRIED.



AND NOW... ALONE AT LAST, THE SUDDEN EMBARRASSMENT OF THE ULTIMATE MOMENT...

WELL, DEAR, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME TO GET A LOOK AT YOUR NEW HUSBAND... AND I...

WAIT, HONEY! NOT YET, FIRST...



HE WATCHED, HIS HEART BEATING LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER IN HIS CHEST, AS SHE REACHED FOR THE LIGHT, FLICKING IT OFF...

HE COULD SEE HER IN THE DIM HALF LIGHT FROM THE BEAM SHINING OUTSIDE... SILHOUETTED... MOVING LITHELY... BLOODHUNGRY...

AND THEN SHE WAS COMING TOWARD HIM AND HE COULD HEAR HER WHISTLES... THE SHORT GASP... EXCITED... PASSIONATE...



LATER... LYING IN THE DARKNESS BESIDE HER, SMOKING A CIGARETTE, HERBIE SMILED...



YOU KNOW, DARLING? I NEVER DID GET TO SEE YOUR FACE...

I KNOW, TANNY...

HER BREATHING BECAME HEAVYER... REGULAR. SHE WAS ASLEEP, HERBIE LAY THERE ANGLE, SMOKING, THE CIGARETTE BURNED DOWN AND HE PUT IT OUT, HIS THOUGHTS DRIFTED BACK ACROSS FIVE YEARS... TO THE FIRST WARDEN DEAR WIFE...



I REMEMBER SEEING HER FOR THE FIRST TIME... WEARING THAT REVOLTING MAG-WASH... AND ADMIRING THAT SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL...

YES, THE MASH HAD HIDDEN HER FACE, BUT IT COULDN'T HIDE HER LOVELY VOICE - HER SAILING EYES AND HER YOUTHFUL CURVACEOUS FIGURE MADE THE MASH BEAM SO OUT OF PLACE.



HE REMEMBERED HOW THEY'D DANCED THAT FIRST NIGHT, NUMBERS AFTER NUMBERS, UNTIL THE CROWD HAD GONE AND THE MUSIC HAD ENDED...



AND HE REMEMBERED HOW THEY'D TALKED BY THE LAKE BENEATH THE CEDRESSES AND WATCHED THE SUN COME UP...



HENRIE REMEMBERED HOW HE'D TRIED TO GAMBLER BUE THAT FIRST TIME.



AND HE REMEMBERED HOW THEY'D VOWED TO MEET AGAIN THE FOLLOWING YEAR... IN THE SAME CAFE... AND HE'D DREAMED ABOUT HER TILL THEN...



FIVE YEARS... YEAR AFTER YEAR... MEETINGS AND DANCING AND TALKING AND FALLING IN LOVE... AND HOW BUE WAS HIS WIFE... AND... AND...



HENRIE REACHED FOR THE LAMP ABOVE THE BED... HE DRAPPED IT ON...





HERBIE REACHED OVER TENTATIVELY...
UNTIENSING THE SILVER CORD THAT
HELD BUE'S MASK IN PLACE...



HE LIFTED THE MASK AWAY...



THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE, THE FACE... THE
MASK... THEY WERE THE SAME...



HERBIE SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN THE DARKNESS... DAWDLE...
HE WAS WET AND CLAMMY AND RELIEVED...



HE BLANDED AT THE WOMAN SLEEPING BESIDE HIM... A
COLD SHOWER OF FEAR SUPPLIED UP HIS SPINE...



HE REACHED FOR THE LIGHT... NERVOUSLY BREATHING...



THE MASK... SHE'S STILL HEARING HER MOTHER... NOT LIKE IN MY DREAM...



HERBIE STRUGGLED WITH THE STRINGS... PULLING IT... BROTTING IT...

BLAST IT...

NOVA... THERE'S STOP...



SHE LOOKED UP AT HIM WITH TERROR IN HER EYES. HE CLAWED AT THE MASK...

DON'T, HERBIE! DON'T TRY TO TAKE IT OFF!

IT'S TIME I SAW, JUST IT'S TIME!



HE WAS A WILD MAN NOW... HIS FINGERS DIGGING IN... TUGGING... PULLING... FRIGHTENED BY THE DREAM... HE HAD TO KNOW...

NO, HERBIE! I BEG OF YOU! YOU SAID IT DOESN'T MATTER. YOU SAID...

IT DOES MATTER... NOW...



A FINAL DESPERATE, ANGRY PULL...

THEN... SHE'S SCREAM OF PROTEST... BLOOD-COURAGING... Hysterical... AND THE MASK COMING AWAY...

NO! NO! EEEEEEEEEEE...

NOW... WE'LL SEE...



HE HELD THE SOFT WET COVERING IN HIS HANDS, STARING DOWN AT HER. HER BLOOD FLOODED OUT OVER THE PILLOW. HER RAW FLESH GOWERED LIVELY. HER EYES BLAZED. HER SICKLY GRINNING MOUTH... NOW STRIPPED OF ITS FLESH LIPS... CROOKED OUT THE WORDS AS HIS STOMACH HEAVED...

I... MURDER... NEVER... MORE... A MASK... WE'RE...

GNORE...



WATCH IT, HERBIE. THAT'S JOE'S BORN YOU HAVE IN YOUR HAND! DON'T FLING IT FROM YOU LIKE THAT! WE MAY LOSE FACE! WELL, REEHER, THAT'S MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S WAR FOR THIS TIME. I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY WAR, THE FABLE OF HORROR. BUT BEFORE I TURN YOU BACK TO C. E., SOME SOUND ADVICE. DON'T TRY TO REMOVE A GAMES' MASK AT ORDER TILL YOU'RE SURE SHE'S WEARING ONE, OR YOU MAY BE STUCK WITH THE CHEERY!



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FANTASY

**WEIRD
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**TWO-FISTED TALES - FRONTLINE COMBAT
MAD**

**WEIRD SCIENCE - WEIRD FANTASY
AND THE 296 ANNUAL ANTHOLOGIES:
WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY**

TWO-FISTED ANNUAL - TALES OF TERROR



As he poised on the edge of the lake, Stan Albert chuckled aloud. This Mr. Karin was a real smart josh. He realized that a small expenditure can often bring fabulous returns if you're not wishy-washy about using methods that are slightly illegal. His offer to Stan was a good example of a shrewd operator skirting with ethics in order to win a potful of money. Stan tensed and his bronzed body arched in a neat dive; hardly a ripple signaled his entry into the water. With powerful strokes he slid quickly under the surface, to the spot where Karin and this dope Foster were fishing from their rowboats. All he had to do for the \$500, Stanley reflected as he surged forward underwater, was detach the bait from Foster's fishing line, so that Karin could land a bigger catch. There was \$5,000 riding on the contest . . . the man to bring in the larger fish would pocket as much as Stan ordinarily made in a year! Smart of Karin to offer half-a-grand just to make the bet less of a gamble for himself! The easiest dough Stan Albert had ever made!

In the greenish water Stan saw Foster's hook: with a powerful surge Stan slipped through the depths toward the object of his pact with Karin. 500 bucks, Stanley thought as he reached out and steadied Foster's bobbing line . . . just to help a man win a contest! A small fortune to make certain that the right man brought in a bigger fish than his opponent!

Carefully, his fingers moving with

great delicacy, Stan began to slide the bait free. This guy Foster was a chiseler, too, Stan grinned. His hook was bigger than had been agreed on; this was a battle between two unscrupulous operators. And he stood to profit from the contest!

Now the bait was almost off the hook, and Stan felt his chest tightening as his lungs clamored for fresh air. The bait was caught on the bent part of the hook and Stan gave a tug to wrench it free. Another 30 seconds was all he could endure without coming to the surface . . . he'd have to throw discretion to the winds and pull the hook good and hard!

Suddenly the line became taut under his fingers and Stan felt the hook slithering free. With surprise he was aware of the glittering metal moving upward. Then a ripping sensation at his throat sent a spasm of pain stabbing through his body. The big hook had become cruelly imbedded in Stan's throat and was tearing the tender skin open with each passing second. Already the water was becoming discolored with the reddish fluid pouring from his gaping wound!

Stan felt himself growing faint as he struggled futilely to escape the torturous hook, and as the life drained swiftly from his writhing body he was dimly aware that he was being lifted laboriously toward the surface. All around him the water had become a swirling mass of blood . . . his fingers were losing all feeling . . . the taste in his mouth was hot, acid, gagging.

In his last moment, before darkness closed in and blotted out Stan Albert's shuddering agony, he knew that Foster . . . working frantically to pull in his line . . . had caught himself a really big fish!



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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Well, look! Seems that our Horror Hit Parade has created quite a stir among you keep-keepers! Here are the latest bookshelves to our collection, courtesy of Nelson Bridwell at Oklahoma City, Ohio, Milton Hughes at Moyock, Ky, Dick Bowers at Glenhurst, Wa., Patrick McFarren of Gettysburg Pa, Emanuel Peleg at Brooklyn, N Y, Richard Reiner of Staten Island, N Y, One Barton of Massay, N Y Roger Todaki at Okanagan Falls, B.C., Les Barkoff of Brooklyn, N Y, and Lynn Weber at Woodchill Lake, N Y

CELANOVICIDE
BILK-BARKEL POLEA
A-ROUND THE CORONER
ANNIE GORY
SLAUGHTER BOY
I LOATHED YOU CRUELLY
SLIME-NOUSE BLUES
THE TENNESSEE VAULTS
SOMEBODY BOLLED MY PAL
HOW'RE YOU GONNA KEEP 'EM DOWN ON THE FARM (AFTER THEY VE READ E.C.)
BETTY NO-HEAD
WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME AGAIN. (HORROR, HORROR!)
I GOT HER SON IN THE MORNING.
ITOOK SCARE THAT NIGHT!
SEVERED HEADS AMONG THE GHOULS
WHO MUNCHED ON THAT BODY IN THE COFFIN.
ICHOKO, CHOOCH!
(THE ONE WITH THE PUTRIFIED VEIL)
WHEN YOU WERE-WOLF
OLD CROAKS AT HOME
CHOOE ME, DRILL ME, SQUISH ME

And while in a musical vein, here are some BOP letters from some of you cats

Dear Crypty,

Dog this, man! I think your comic books are real gone.

I Formano
Newark, N J

I'd walk a mile for you man . . . it's real cool!

Judy Albarado
Chicago Ill

Man! That one-a-o-o-ary cool story, "The Howler," by Roy Bradley, in the last cool issue of "Tales From The Crypt," was real cool!

Magster Jim Mason
Richmond N Y

P.S. Dog that one-a-o-o-ary underhater!

I want to congratulate you and your "mann federates" for handling out such super-George magz

I'd like to start an E.C. fan club! Anyone interested can write to:

Lynn Weber
Woodchill Lake, N Y

Anyone interested can write to US, Lynn! Yap, my club editors have informed me that, due to the huge quantity of requests through the E.C. organization, is contemplating starting some sort of fan club. The last issue (7) are now busy at work contemplating. Further announcements will be forthcoming when the contemplations have been completed. But don't worry

it's not money! See THE VAULT OF HORROR No. 23 for the last exciting episode in the latest money-grubbing scam!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

If someone doesn't have enough sense to buy E.C., then he's probably too stupid to understand this answer

Bob West
Oklahoma City, Ohio

I can't help thinking how much Shakespeare caused by not reading or writing stories like yours. They're super!

Ronald Froese
Dayton, Ohio

How is the back cover of human life in the same apartment with a corpse for about two months? I'm referring to "Carnally Edited" . . . in P.C. No. 26, Woodchill . . . well . . . bit of stuff! Certainly, when Mrs. Clayton called upon Mr. Dumas, and he opened the door wide open, wouldn't she have smelted the smell from the meat? No not, please explain

Jack Lova
San Antonio Texas

Cryptopy!

Dear C.K.,

You have forgotten an important character in Horror Adventure . . . the GHOUL! Won't you try to put a GHOULish story in your books?

Stanley Simpson
Adelphi, Pa

We may oblige you sooner than you think, Crypty!

In closing, the usual commercial announcement: The third annual TALES OF TERROR, E.C.'s horror anthology, 124 pages of chills (7), sixteen complete stories above, now counting 4 books . . . replace from \$52 . . . is now available for 25c, your name and your address! Subscriptions to any E.C. mag will cost you the unheard of price of 75c . . . 5¢ a dollar . . . for six . . . half a dozen . . . copies (E.C. fan club! They're all contemplating!) Address where you send for all this shiver . . . or where YOU send US shiver . . . is:

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 706, Dept. 28
225 Lafayette St
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

ERNIE VISITED THE DOCTOR
BUT NEVER EXPECTED THE

LAST LAUGH



ERNIE SHIFTED UNCOMFORTABLY ON THE LEATHER CHAIR IN THE DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM. FROM TIME TO TIME, THE EXPRESSION ON HIS LOOSE FLABBY-FEATURED FACE WOULD CHANGE FROM ONE OF ANXIETY TO THAT OF A CHEERFUL SMILE, AND HE WOULD CHUCKLE SLIGHTLY OR LAUGH OUT LOUD. WHEN THAT HAPPENED, HE WOULD CLUTCH HIS STOMACH AND THE SMILE WOULD FADE, AND THE ANXIETY WOULD RETURN ONCE MORE. HE THROSE HIS HEAD EARLY AFTER HIS MOST RECENT OUTBURST OF HILARITY AND LOOKED UP WITH RELIEF AS DOCTOR FALSER ENTERED.

I'M SORRY I KEPT YOU WAITING, SIR, BUT I'VE BEEN HAVING PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES AT HOME. YOUR CALL SEEMED URGENT. WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?

IT'S MY STOMACH, DOC! I GOT PAINS! IT HURTS ME... HERE... EVERY TIME I LAUGH!



DOCTOR FALSER SLIPPED OUT OF HIS OVERCOAT.

ALL RIGHT? WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT YOU. IF YOU'LL STEP THIS WAY, MR... MR... I'M AFRAID I DIDN'T CATCH THE NAME...

GEELY, DOC! ERNIE GEELY? I'M NEW 'ROUND THESE PARTS' BEEN IN TOWN ABOUT FIVE WEEKS.



THE DOCTOR LED MR. GEELY INTO HIS EXAMINATION ROOM AND ROLLED UP HIS SLEEVES.

MIGHT AS WELL GIVE YOU A TADPOURN GOING-OVER, MR. GEELY, WHILE I'M EXAMINING YOU, YOU CAN FEEL ME ABOUT THIS PAIR YOU'VE BEEN WEARIN'...

STARTED LAST WEEK, I MUSTA STRAINED MYSELF OR SOMETHIN'.



THE DOCTOR BENT OVER THE SINK AND BEGAN TO WASH HIS HANDS...

STRAINED YOURSELF, MR. CEELEY? HOW? OH... IF YOU'LL PLEASE REMOVE YOUR SHIRT...

SURE, DOC? YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I WOULD HAVE HAPPENED FOR SEE, DOC... I GO FOR HARE.

DOC FALDER LOOKED AT ERNE QUIZZICALLY AS HE DROPPED HIS SCRUBBED HANDS...

SO FOR HARE, MR. CEELEY? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

YARE, DOC? LARRAB? LARRE? CHARRER? I SET A BAMBOUT OF JOKES... PRACTICAL JOKES...

THE DOCTOR SLIPPED INTO HIS WHITE LAB COAT...

OH, I SEE?

MY LAST WEEK I NEARLY DIED LAUGHIN'; I PULLED THIS GAS, SEE AND I FINARE DETRAINED MYSELF LAUGHIN' OVER IT.

ERNE STOOD BEFORE THE DOCTOR, STRIPPED TO THE WAIST... THE EXAMINING ROOM LIGHTS REFLECTING ON HIS OBERE BOOB. DOC FALDER PLACED HIS STETHO-SCOPE TO HIS EAR...

SO YOU'RE A PRACTICAL JOKER, ER, MR. CEELEY? WHAT SORT OF PRACTICAL JOKE?

ER, YOU KNOW, DOC. STUFF LIKE I CALL UP A NUMBER, SAY OLD NUMBER... SOME NIGHT...

...AND I SAY...

THIS IS THE ELECTRIC COMPANY, MACHA. WE'RE CHECKIN' ON THE STREET LAMP'S IN YOUR AREA. WOULD YOU KINDLY LOOK AND SEE IF THE STREET LAMP OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSE IS LIT?

OF COURSE, HOLD ON, PLEASE...

SO THE SUGGER BOBS, SEE, AN' WHEN THEY COME BACK THEY SAY...

YEA, THE STREET LAMP OUTSIDE MY HOUSE IS LIT.

WELL, BE SURE TO PUT IT OUT BEFORE YOU GO TO BED, HUH, HONEY? 'YEA.

ERNE BEGAN TO LAUGH UPROARIOUSLY...

THEY HUH... THEY FALL FOR IT EVERY TIME, DOC... HUH, HEH... THEY... DDDOON! IT HURTS...

BREATHE DEEPLY AND HOLD IT.



THE DOCTOR MOVED THE STETHOSCOPE ABOUT ERNIE'S CHEST, LISTENING BRILLY...

ALL RIGHT, EXHALE. GO ON, MR. CEELY.

OR I CALL UP A CANDY STORE.



"AM I SAY?"

BOSS'S CANDY STORE? YES, SIR!
YOU GOT PROPLEP MORRIS IN A CARTON?

WELL, LET 'EM GOO, HUMP ME DOWNER'S GETTIN' COOL.



THE DOCTOR FOLDED AWAY HIS STETHOSCOPE AS ERNIE SUFFERED HEARTILY AGAIN...

STUFF LIKE THAT. HEH, HEH! WHAT A BROT! HEH, HEH! I DOOOOON

AND LAST WEEK? YOU MY LAST WEEK YOU SEEMED TO STRAIN YOURSELF?



DOCTOR FALDER WRAPPED THE BLOOD-PRESSURE MAN AROUND ERNIE'S ARM. ERNIE NODDED, SMILING...

DOO! LAST WEEK I PULLED THE GREATEST... THE HONEST. THE BEST FAR I EVER PULLED. I TELL YOU... I NEARLY DIED LAUGHIN'!

AND WHAT WAS THAT, MR. CEELY?



ERNE STARTED TO CHUCKLE...

I GOT THE IDEA, BUT I NOTICE THAT THE FIBS IN THIS BIRD ALL PLAY DOWN BY THE RAILROAD TRACKS. AN' I NOTICE THAT THE LAWYER SHOOTS THROUGH, BOO! ABOUT SEVENTH, EVERY DAY AT NOON.



"SO LAST WEEK, I BUY ME SOME HONES OF HORSE-WEAT. REAL CHEAP STUFF AND AN' BURN AN' BLOOD. AN' I BUY ME SOME KID'S CLOTHES. AN' I STUFF THE MEAT IN THE KID'S CLOTHES AND I GO DOWN TO THE TRACKS ABOUT NOON AND I LAY THE MEAT ON THE TRACKS NEAR WHERE SOME KID IS PLAYIN'."





"AN' I WAIT, AND WHEN THE LIMITED SHOOTS BY, I SCREAM."

"HEY! SOMEBODY WAS SCREAMING ABOUT?"



"DOC, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE FACES ON THOSE BOYS! THEY TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE BODY BERS AND THEY STARTED RUNNING IN ALL DIRECTIONS!"

"HEH, HEH, HEH"

"FOLLY!"

"GEE! MA!"



ERNE CLUTCHED AT HIS STOMACH, SCREAMING AND GIBBLING ALTERNATELY.

"ARRRRR, DOC, I NEARLY DIED LAST NIGHT. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THEIR FACES. SOON, THE WHOLE TOWN CAME OUT..."



IT TOOK TEN MINUTES AND FOUR HOURS BEFORE THEY FOUND OUT IT *WASN'T* NO KID GOT KILLED, SHINING AND AMBULANCES PULSED AROUND LIKE CRAZY.

AND YOU LAUGHING.



"SPIN!"

"WAIT HERE, MR. CEELEY. I'LL BE A MOMENT."



DOC WALKED LEFT ERNE ALONE IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, HE CAME BACK WITH FOUR CAPSULES IN ONE HAND AND A SLATE OF WATER IN THE OTHER...

"HERE, MR. CEELEY. SWALLOW THESE!"

"TUN KNOW WHAT'S SWALLOWING, DOC? WILL I BE ALL RIGHT?"



ERNE TOOK THE CAPSULES AND SWALLOWED THEM. YOU'LL BE FINE, MR. CEELEY. AND NOW, I WANT YOU TO GO OUT INTO THE WAITING ROOM AND SIT DOWN. I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I'M READY. I WANT TO PERFORM SOME TESTS ON YOU.

"SOME, DOC, SOME!"

ERNE WENT OUT INTO THE WAITING ROOM AND SAT DOWN. HE COULD HEAR DOCTOR PALMER MOVING EQUIPMENT AROUND BEHIND THE CLOSED EXAMINATION ROOM DOOR...

JUST RELAX, MR. CEELY. I'LL BE READY FOR YOU SHORTLY.

OHAY, DOC?



FIFTEEN MINUTES WENT BY. ERNE BEGAN TO SHOW IMPATIENCE. THIRTY MINUTES, ERNE FELT A PUNNY PIERCING PAIN IN HIS STOMACH. THIRTY MINUTES, FINALLY...

I'M READY, CEELY. WILL YOU COME IN NOW?

DOC? SOMETHIN'S WAP-PENIN' MY HERE! IT HURTS! EVEN WHEN I DON'T LAUGH, DOC!



ERNE FOLLOWED THE DOCTOR INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM ONCE MORE.

GET COMPLETELY UNDRRESSED, MR. CEELY... HANG FOR YOUR SHORTS! AND WHILE YOU'RE DOING THAT, LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY...

OHAY, DOC, BUT **SEE** WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THESE NEW PAINS I GOT ACHAVIN'!



THE DOCTOR NODDED SMILY, WATCHING ERNE DISROBE. HE BEGAN TO TALK...

THERE WAS A FAMILY IN THIS TOWN, MR. CEELY! A MOTHER, A FATHER, AND TWO CHILDREN... BOYS... ONE, ERNE... THE YOUNG ONE, THREE...

CAN'T STAND EIGHT! BOY, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THEIR FACES WHEN THEY SAW THAT BLOODY MESS!



ONE DAY THE MOTHER SENT HER TWO BOYS OUT TO PLAY. SHE TOLD THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD TO WATCH THE THREE-YEAR-OLD AND KEEP HIM OUT OF MESSIER.

SEE THAT STEVEY DIDN'T GET HIMSELF DIRTY, MAMMY.

YES, MAMMY!



BUT THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD WANDERED AWAY... LEFT THE THREE-YEAR-OLD DISREGARDED HIS MOTHER'S BIDDING... AND THE THREE-YEAR-OLD GOT ALL MESSY PLAYING WHERE HE SHOULDN'T HAVE.

OH, STEVEY! JUST LOOK AT YOU!



THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD WENT TO PLAY WITH HIS FRIENDS. HE'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT HIS LITTLE THREE YEAR OLD BROTHER UNTIL HE HEARD A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM.



JEFFREY THOUGHT THAT THE BLOOD REMAINS LYING UPON THE RAILROAD TRACKS WAS HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, STEVEY! FEAR CLUTCHED AT HIS LITTLE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD HEART. HE STARTED RUNNING HOME WILDLY. HE NEVER SAW THE TRUCK.



MA! MA!

LOOK OUT!

THE MOTHER RUSHED OUT OF HER HOUSE WHEN SHE HEARD HER OLDER BOY'S SHRIEK OF FEAR AND THE REVEAL OF THE TRUCK'S BRASS!



JEFFREY BY BABY!

IN HER FRIGHTENED ANXIETY, THE MOTHER THOUGHTLESSLY LEFT HER THREE-YEAR-OLD SON IN THE TUB WHERE BATHS HAD BEEN SETTING HIM.



MAMA, MOM - MAMA

ENRIE STOOD, DISOCCUPED, BEFORE THE DOCTOR, STAMING AT HIS WIDE FLAMING EYES.



YOU? YES, MR. CEELY, THAT WAS MY FAMILY'S STORY. THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD DIED FROM HEAVY STROKE BY THE TRUCK. THE BABY DROWNED. MY WIFE DROPPED DEAD OF A HEART ATTACK.

DOCTOR FALDER'S GRIP WAS LIKE A WIRE OF STEEL AS HE TIED ENRIE CEELY TO THE EXAMINATION TABLE.



YOU SAY YOU ALMOST DIED LAUGHING WHEN YOUR PRACTICAL JOKE, MR. CEELY? WELL, NOW YOU WILL DIE LAUGHING IF THOSE CAPSULES I GAVE YOU CONTAINED FISH HOOKS... BARBED LITTLE FISH HOOKS.

DOCTOR FALDER ROLLED OUT THE EQUIPMENT HE'D PREPARED AND SET IT ABOUT THE STRIPPED RECLINING FIGURE OF SCREAMING ENRIE CEELY. THEN THE DOC TURNED ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT ON, AND THE FEATHERS TWIRLED THE SOLES OF ENRIE'S FEET AND NUDED HIS BUMB AND UNDER HIS ARMS AND BEHIND HIS EARS...



DIE LAUGHING, ENRIE! DIE LAUGHING!

MEN... MEN... NO... MEN... NO... YAAAAAAAAHHH!

MEN... MEN...

AND DOWN LEANS ENRIE CEELY WITH THE LITTLE FISH HOOKS IN HIS GOOBERING STOMACH, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THE DOC WILL MAKE SURE ENRIE GETS THE POINT OF THIS GAG... BARBED POINTS! IN FACT, ENRIE... THE LAST YOU WILL SEE YOUR AND NOW, THE OLD WITCH SMITH, WITH HER KETTLE OF FRABLY, KREEP... KOOKERY.



WHE, WHEFOOM. ENRIE, ANYWAY, MY LAST BELLY LAUGH! A REAL RIG-TICKLER. GOODBYE MR. BOY, HE DID!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

WEE, WEE! AND NOW THAT YOUR APPETITES FOR HORROR HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY FIDDED BY MY FELLOW SLIME-SLIMBERS...E.K. AND V.K., IT'S TIME FOR ME TO FEED YOU FOUL FARE. SO HOP INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, FIENDS, AND YOUR HOSTESS IN HEAVEN, THE OLD WITON, WILL DIGH OUT THE DELICIOUS DELVING INTO THE DELIRIOUS, CALLED—

MOURNIN' MESS

THE CEMETERY LAY SILENT BENEATH A COLD MOON THAT SIPPED IN AND OUT FROM BEHIND DARK CLOUDS THAT RACED ALONG ON A BRISK NOVEMBER WIND. BELOW, THE MUFFLED SOUND OF DIGGING ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT. A MAN STOOD KNEE-DEEP IN AN EXCAVATION AMONG THE FLAT PLAINLY-MARKED GRAVES, ANXIOUSLY SINKING HIS SPADE IN TO THE SOFT EARTH AND TOSSEING IT ONTO A GROWING PILE BEHIND HIM. EVERY SO OFTEN THE MAN WOULD STOP HIS WORK, LISTEN, AND THEN... HEARING NOTHING...CONTINUE DIGGING...

I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING SCARY ABOUT THE WHOLE SET-UP, RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING. I FELT IT. NOW I'M GOING TO FIND OUT... FOR SURE.



THE MAN FURIOUSLY SPADED THE BLACK LOAM OUT OF THE EVER-DEEPENING HOLE... ALL THE WHILE MUMBLING TO HIMSELF...

'THE UNWATEFUL HORRORS' SOCIETY!' HMMPH! IT SMELLED FUNNY FROM THE START! AN EXPERIENCED REPORTER LEARNS TO SENSE THESE THINGS. AND I SENSED IT. THAT FIRST DAY... AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE.



"I REMEMBER HOW POPPABLE OLD MAYOR WERE STOOD BEFORE US AND WHEEZED OUT HIS ANNOUNCEMENT...

BENTLEMAN! OUR FAIR CITY HAS LONG HAD THE PROBLEM OF DISPOPOSING OF ITS DECEASED AND HOMELESS ONES WHO PASS AWAY WITH NO FRIENDS OR RELATIVES TO PROPERLY BURY THEM.

HERE TO FORE, THESE WRETCHED UNFORTUNATES HAVE BEEN LAID TO REST IN OUR CITY IN POTTER'S FIELDS MAINTAINED BY YOUR TAXES. NOW, THIS SAD RESPONSIBILITY HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT OF YOUR CITY'S HANDS, BENTLEMAN...

...MAY I PRESENT FELIX J. COPEHARD, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GRATEFUL HORDES SOCIETY, WHO WILL TELL YOU OF THE WONDERFUL OFFER HIS ORGANIZATION HAS MADE THE OFFER I HAVE GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED!" MR. COPEHARD.

"I REMEMBER SHUT-EYED MR. COPEHARD... SMILING... SOFT-WOMEN..."

BENTLEMAN, "THE GRATEFUL HORDES OUTCASTS, AND UNWANTED LAYAWAY SOCIETY," THE GRATEFUL HORDES SOCIETY FOR SHORT... WAS FORMED BY A GROUP OF SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL MEN WHO FELT THAT THEY OWED A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO THIS FAIR CITY.

ALL THE MEMBERS OF THIS ORGANIZATION CAME TO THE CITY AS DOWN-AND-OUTERS, DRIFTERS, DECEASED, OR JUST PLAIN BUMS. BUT HERE, THEY FOUND OPPORTUNITY. HERE, THEY FOUND FINANCIAL SUCCESS, AND SO, IN GRATITUDE... THEY HAVE Banded TOGETHER TO AID AND ENDOW OTHERS LESS FORTUNATE THAN THEMSELVES... OTHER DRIFTERS AND UNWANTED. THEY HAVE PURCHASED A SMALL PARCEL OF LAND IN ONE OF OUR CITY'S SUBURBS, LANDSCAPED IT... AND HAVE TURNED IT INTO A CEMETERY...

...A BEAUTIFUL CEMETERY... WHERE THE POOR OUTCASTS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN AS FORTUNATE AS THEY MAY BE LAID TO FINAL REST IN DIGNITY WHEN THEY PASS FROM OUR MORTAL WORLD...

"THE GRATEFUL HORDES"... WHO PREFER TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS... HAVE CREATED AN EMPLOYMENT FUND THROUGH MUTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS, WITH WHICH ALL FUNERAL AND CEMETERY UNKEEP EXPENSES WILL BE MET. NO LONGER WILL YOUR TAXES BE NEEDED FOR THIS PURPOSE. NO LONGER WILL SHODDY POTTER'S FIELDS MAR THE BEAUTY OF OUR FAIR CITY'S SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE. NO LONGER WILL...



"YES, IT SMELLS FINE! ALL RIGHT I REMEMBER LISTENING TO MR. COPELAND TALK ON ST. POUNDING UPON THE WONDERFUL GROUP OF PHILANTHROPISTS HE REPRESENTED... AND I REMEMBER FINALLY ADMIRING."

"MY GOD! FROM ME, COPELAND? I HAD IT *WHY* SHOULD A GROUP OF RICH MEN SUDDENLY BECOME CONCERNED ABOUT SOME DERELICTS' FUNERALS?"

"I EXPLAINED SIR, ALL OF THESE MEN..."

"YES, YES... THEY WERE ALL *ONCE BOMBS* THEMSELVES. YOU EXPLAINED THAT, BUT *WHY* WAIT UNTIL THESE DERELICTS DIED BEFORE HELPING THEM? COULDN'T THE MONEY BE PUT TO *BETTER USE* BY *REHABILITATING* THEM WHILE THEY WERE ALIVE?"

"THE *GRATEFUL* *HONORS*' ARE ALL *SELF-MADE* MICK, SIR. *THEY* RECEIVED NO HELP WHEN THEY WERE DOWN."

"THE *PRESIDENT* CONDITION OF THE DERELICT IN OUR CITY DOES NOT *CONVINCE* THESE MEN. LET THE DERELICT *RISE UP* AS THEY HAVE DONE, BUT WHEN THE DERELICT CAN NO LONGER *RISE UP* WHEN HE HAS *PASSED ON*... THEN LET HIM BE *GRAVED* IN *FINAL REST*..."

"I *STILL* DON'T GET IT..."



"I REMEMBER ATTENDING THAT FIRST FUNERAL... AND BEING *'THE GRATEFUL HONORS' SOCIETY'S* CEMETERY FOR THE FIRST TIME."

"ASHER TO ASHER... DUST TO DUST."

"NICE PLACE, BREWSTER."

"YEAH, *BEAUTIFUL*! IT ALMOST *PAYS* TO *DIE* *PERFIDIOUS*."

"AND I REMEMBER IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, RETURNING FROM TIME TO TIME AND SEEING THE ROLLING LAWNS WITH THE SIMPLE GRAVE MARKERS..."

"HOW COME NO *GRAVE* *MARKERS*?"

"I ONLY *FOUR* HERE, BREWSTER. THE *SOCIETY* SAYS THIS IS THE *MODERN* WAY A CEMETERY SHOULD *LOOK*... SO I *DON'T* *THEY* SAY..."



"BUT AFTER A WHILE THE WORD OF *'THE GRATEFUL HONORS' SOCIETY* BECAME STALE NEWS AND I TURNED TO OTHER THINGS. THEN, THIS MORNING, MY EDITOR CALLED ME IN."

"BREWSTER, YOU COVERED THE OPENING OF *'THE GRATEFUL HONORS' SOCIETY'S* CEMETERY FOR OUTGATS AND UNWANTED, DIDN'T YOU?"

"YEAH, CHIEF! WHAT'S UP?"

"WELL, ACCORDING TO THE *DEPT* DEPARTMENT THEY'RE BURSTING THE *THOUSANDTH* DERELICT TODAY. TAKE A RUN OUT AND *COVER* IT FOR US, HUH? IT *DOHN'T* BE WORTH A *PARAGRAPH* OR TWO..."

"SURE, CHIEF! HEY, DID YOU SAY THE *THOUSANDTH* DERELICT?"





FEAR, WHY?

BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! IT COULDN'T BE...

WHY COULDN'T IT? IT'S BEEN ALMOST SEVEN YEARS. THIS IS A BIG CITY. WE GOT A LOT OF BOMS...

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, OBEY, I'LL SEE YOU LATER.

'SO I GROVE OUT HERE THIS MORNING...

SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?

I'M SURE, FROM THE GLOBE. COME OUT TO COVER THE FUNERAL TODAY...



OH? I SEE WELL, THE GRAVEMEN ARE OVER THERE NOW, PREPARING THE GRAVE.

I'LL JUST WORRY OVER AND BACK, IF YOU DON'T MIND.



I WATCHED THEM FOR THE SIX FOOT HOLE.

GRAB THAT'S IT!

JUST IN TIME FOR HERE THEY COME!



I WATCHED THE WHOLE CEREMONY. A FEW DERELICT FRIENDS OF THE DEPARTED ONE HAD COME ALONG TO PAY THEIR LAST RESPECTS TO THEIR FELLOW...

LOWER THE COFFIN...

HE WAS A SWELL FELLOW.

BONNIF



AFTER THE CEREMONY, THE GRAVEMEN RETURNED AND SHOVELLED THE DIRT BACK INTO THE HOLE AND MOUND IT UP NEATLY.

THERE, THAT'S O.K.

C'MON!

HEHEHE...

AFTER THE GRABBERERS LEFT, I STOOD A WHILE LOOKING OUT OVER THE ROLLING LAWNS WITH THE SIMPLE MARKERS AND THE NEW FRESH GRAVE-MOUND PUTTING OUT LIES & SORE THINGS...

THAT'S STRANGE!
VERY STRANGE...



I STARTED PACING. I PACED ALONG THE GATE ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE CEMETERY. THEN I PACED ALONG THE GATE ON THE NORTH SIDE.

I'M RIGHT. I KNOW I'M RIGHT!



I WENT BACK TO THE CAR. I STARTED SCRIBBLING AWAY ON MY MEMO-PAD... FIGURING...

JUST WHAT I THOUGHT!
THERE ISN'T ENOUGH AREA
IN THAT CEMETERY FOR A
THOUSAND GRAVES!



THERE WAS SOMETHING *RIGHT* ABOUT THIS MESS-UP. I KNEW IT. I TOOK A LAST LOOK AT THE SINGLE MOUND AND THE GREENERY...



THEY MUST
BE STACKIN'
THEM ONE
ABOVE THE
OTHER...
UNLESS...

AND DROVE TO THE NEAREST SHOPPING SECTION. I STOPPED AT A HARDWARE STORE.



I'D LIKE TO BUY A SPADE.

I DROVE BACK TO THE CEMETERY AND MO-ED MY CAR. I SCALED THE FENCE, PICKED A HOME PLACE, AND WAITED... WATCHING IT GOON DARK.



I'LL FIND OUT. I'LL FIND
OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

AND THEN, SOMETHING HAPPENED. SOMETHING WEIRD AND FRIGHTENING. THE MOUND... THE SINGLE GRAVE-MOUND... SANK DOWN INTO THE EARTH... SUNK DOWN UNTIL IT WAS LEVEL WITH THE SURROUNDING GRASS.



GOOD LORD.

THE CEMETERY LAY SILENT BENEATH A GOLD MOON. THE MUFFLED SOUND OF GRASSING RICHED INTO THE NIGHT. THE MAN MUMBLED TO HIMSELF AS HE DUG FURIOUSLY...



SO I'LL FIND OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT! I'LL FIND OUT. WHY SHOULD A GRAVE MOUND JUST SINK DOWN... JUST VANISH?!

THE SOUND OF METAL STRIKING METAL NEVER STOPPED IN THE DEEP HOLE THE MAN HAD DUG. HE LOOKED AROUND, CONFUSED...



METAL? THAT'S FUNNY! THE COFFIN WAS WOOD! AND... HEY! I'M A GOOD SIX FEET DOWN I SHOULD HAVE HIT THE COFFIN LONG AGO! THIS ISN'T THE COFFIN...

THE MAN CLEARED THE SOIL AWAY FROM THE METAL FLOOR OF THE GRAVE...



THE COFFIN IS BOMB! THIS... THIS IS A BOMB... A BOMB THAT OWNS COMMAND!

THE MAN STOOD UP IN THE GRAVE. HE STARED AT THE OLD HOUSE HE SAW BEYOND THE CEMETERY GATES. THERE WERE LIGHTS ON INSIDE IT, BEAMS THROUGH SHADY BRANCHES...



NOW I GET IT! NOW I GET IT! THE HATEFUL HORDES...

SUDDENLY THE METAL FLOOR BENEATH THE MAN'S FEET COLLAPSED AND HE PLUMMETED DOWNWARD.



GOOD EVENING, MR. SWEENEY. I PROMISE I HEARD YOU KNOCKING!



COVERARD!

IT IS TOO BAD THAT YOU DISCOVERED OUR LITTLE SECRET, MR. SWEENEY.



THIS IS HOW YOU CAN BURY A THOUSAND BODIES IN A CEMETERY THAT COULDN'T HOLD SIX HUNDRED.

EXACTLY, MR. SWEENEY, AND NOW, IF YOU WILL LEAD THE WAY BEHIND THIS SIGN I HAVE HERE... I WILL SHOW YOU SOME INTRIGATE UNDERGROUND NETWORKS

BUT WHY? WHY ALL THIS?

AS A MATTER OF FACT, MR. SWEENEY, WE GOT THE IDEA FROM A COMIC MAGAZINE? OR... NOTICE THAT THERE IS A STEEL TRAP DOOR BENEATH EACH SEAT? LOCATION ALL THIS ELIMINATED BLOOD, YOU SEE!

THAT'S WHY THE BLOOD SUNK DOWN? OR... YOU SAY YOU GOT THE IDEA FROM A COMIC MAGAZINE?

YES A HORROR MAGAZINE... 'TALES FROM THE CRYPT', I BELIEVE IN IT WAS A STORY CALLED 'MIDNIGHT MESS' UP THOSE STAIRS, PLEASE...

'MIDNIGHT MESS'? WHAT WAS IT ABOUT?

IT WAS ABOUT AN ORGANIZATION OF VAMPIRES WHO ESTABLISHED A RESTAURANT WHERE THEY COULD GET THE BLOOD THEY NEEDED THROUGH THAT DOOR. PLEASE

THE 'WRAITHFUL HORDES' VAMPIRES?

OH, NO, MR. SWEENEY WE MERELY APPLIED THE STORY TO OUR OWN NEEDS. ALL WE DID WAS BUY THIS HOUSE, AND... IN THERE, PLEASE...

GOOD LORD?

THERE WERE TWENTY OR THIRTY OF THEM... SITTING ABOUT THE MAIN BANQUET TABLE... WIPING THEIR MOUTHS WITH THEIR NAPKINS...

MEET THE 'WRAITHFUL HORDES, OUTCASTS AND UNWANTEDS' LASHWAY BOGIE FY, MR. SWEENEY, WE ARE WHAT OUR INITIALS STAND FOR...

CHOO...

GHOULS

'AH, SEE, BEE?' SHE, BOOM, BEEAN?' STICK 'EM IN THE JAW DAW!' 'HIS BONES ARE PICKED CLEAN!' 'HIS, HEE! THAT'S THE ORGANIZATION'S, GIBBER, CREEPY! NO GROWING!' AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO PUT OUT THE FIRE UNDER MY CRIMMY GAWLDRIF AND CLOSE THE DOOR TO MY REEYING RESTAURANT FOR FASTY TERROR TEE-BEEZ. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN 'THE WAIL' OF HORROR. TILL THEN, GET YOUR OWN'S WORTH!' READ THIS WHOLE 'NAG OVER AGAIN!' I DARE YOU!



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THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEY, HEY! SO YOU'RE BACK FOR *MORE BORE*, OR, FINEST? WELL, THIS IS THE SPOT FOR IT! WELCOME TO *THE CRYPT OF TERROR!* THIS IS YOUR *HOST* IN *WORDS*, THE *CRYPT-KEEPER*, READY TO START THE *BRAVE* ROLLING IN MY *RECKING RAG* WITH *ANOTHER SPINE-TINGLING TALE* FROM MY *CREEP-COLLECTION*. TIGHTEN YOUR BELTS SO YOU WON'T BE *SCARED* OUT OF YOUR *PANTS*, AND I'LL *BEGIN* THE *BLOOD-GOBLINER* I TELL...

UNDERTAKING PALOR



MR. KROCKER'S BLACK PANEL TRUCK HAD PULLED UP BEFORE HIS MORTUARY, AND SOMEHOW HE'D GOTTEN THE SILENT WICKER WITH ITS SLEELY CONTENTS INSIDE. WHILE OUT IN THE LITTER-STRAW BACK YARD THE KID HAD CREEPT TO THE BACK WINDOW ON TIP-TOES, LIKE SO MANY GREY SHAGGONS... LIKE SO MANY MICE... THEY'D PEDDLED INTO THE PORCELAIN AND GLASS-LINED UNDERTAKING PARLOR WITH WIDE EYES AND CHATTERING TEETH, WHISPERING...

THAT'S OLD MAN KROCKER? HE DIED YESTER-DAY!

MR. KROCKER'S GETTIN' READY TO BRING HIM...

I DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT HIM!

SHHH!

LOOK! IT'S SOLVED!



THERE IS A HORRID CURIOUSITY IN CHILDREN, A STRANGE FASCINATION WITH DEATH. IT HURRIES THEM TO THE SCREENS OF ACCIDENTS, BUCKS THEM INTO MOVIE THEATERS TO WATCH IT UNFOLD ON SILVER SCREENS, PROMPTS THEM TO MARK-BELIEVE ABOUT IT - AND DRAWS THEM TO WINDOWS IN UNDERSTANDING PARLORS...

WHAT'S HE DOIN' DOWN, CHERRY?
HE'S TAKIN' OFF THE SLOINER!
SH-H-HH!
HE'LL HEAR YOU!



DEATH IS THE UNKNOWN IN THE LIFE EQUATION. IT IS THE ULTIMATE FINAL RESULT OF EVERY LIVING EXAMPLE. IT IS THE UNANSWERABLE TO YOUNG MINDS SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS...

NEW HE'S BOLLY? I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD!
SHARRPING HIS SCALPEL?



SO IT WAS ONLY NATURAL FOR CHERRY AND PETE AND BILLY AND PERCIVAL TO WANT TO SEE MORE OF THIS UNFATHOMABLE PROBLEM. TO WANT TO LEARN WHAT WENT ON BEHIND MR. ESPROCK'S CLOSED MORTUARY DOORS...

IF IT MAKES YOU SICK, DON'T LOOK, PERCY!
USH! HE'S SLICING OLD MR. GROVES' BODY AT THE BASE OF HIS NECK...



INSIDE THE MORTUARY, OBVIOUS TO THE WIDE PRYING EYES THAT FOLLOWED HIS EVERY MOVE, AVERILL ESPROCK LARCHED SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY, AS IF HE ENJOYED HIS WORK...

WHAT'S THAT WE'VE DOWN, BILLY?
STICKIN' A NEEDLE WITH A FEELER INTO THE CUP HE MADE IN MR. GROVES' NECK!



AND AS HE WORKED, AVERILL HUMMED SOFTLY, FILLING THE MORTUARY WITH HIS MATED GREEN BUSS...

HE'S TURNIN' ON SOME KIND OF MOTOR?
HE'S FUMIN' OUT THE BLOOD, THAT'S WHAT HE'S DOIN'!
GROAAAAA...



THE PUMP BEGAN TO CHUG, SURGLING THE SCARLET LIQUID OUT OF THE DEAD BODY THROUGH THE PULSATING TUBE AND SENDING IT INTO THE PORCELAIN SINK...

BOLLY! WE COULD CHARGE THE BIZZ! OF THE GANG ADMISSIONS TO WATCH THIS!
MR. GROOVY! YOU'RE ALWAYS THINKIN' OF WAYS Y'MAKE MONEY!



AFTER A WHILE THE GURGLING STOPPED AND THE PUMP RAN QUIETLY...

THE BLOOD'S ALL PUMPED OUT!
NOW WHAT?
HE'S TAKIN' DOWN THAT BIG JUB OF LIQUID!



MR. ESPROCK BUNGLED THE HOSE THAT RAN OFF INTO THE RED-STAINED PORCELAIN SINK AND PUSHED IT INTO THE NECK OF THE JUG WITH THE COLORLESS LIQUID...

I'LL BET A NICKEL THAT'S **EMERALMIN** FLUID!

I'LL BET YOU'RE **RIGHT!**

I'M GONNA **NOMIE**, MY **PAPA'S** BEEN **STUCK** AND

STUCK AROUND, **PENCY!**

AVERILL PRESSED A SWITCH, THE PUMP REVERSED ITSELF, THE GURGLING BEGAN AGAIN, THE COLORLESS LIQUID IN THE JUG BEGAN TO SLOWLY DISAPPEAR, FORCED INTO MR. GROVES' EMPTY ARTERIES...

SEE? WHAT'S I TELL YOU!

GRAY, SMART BUT? SO YOU KNOW EVERYTHING?

REALLY, FELLOWS, POP'S BEEN IN BED, AN...

STUCK AROUND, PENCY!

THE LAST DROP OF THE EMERALMIN FLUID GARGLED OUT OF THE JUG AS THE LAST DROP OF A SOCA IS SUCKED FROM A FOUNTAIN GLASS THROUGH A FRAYED STRAW. MR. ESPROCK SHUT OFF THE MOTOR...

IS HE DONE?

WAIT AN **SEC!**

LISTEN, SOMEONE JUST CAME IN THE FRONT DOOR!

SOMEWHERE IN THE MORTUARY, A BELL TINKLED, MR. ESPROCK STOPPED. A FIGURE DREPT ASIDE THE CURTAINS AND CAME INTO THE BACK ROOM.

HOWDY, AVERILL! I COME FOR MY **CUT!**

ANYBODY SEE YOU COME IN, **MORT?**

THE KIDS PEERING THROUGH THEIR PEEP-HOLE WHISPERED EXCITEDLY...

IT'S **MR. STONEY**, THE **DRUGGIST!** WHAT'S HE WANT?

LISTEN! MAYBE WE'LL **FIND OUT!**

NOPE... **NOBODY** SAW ME, **HOW** MUCH DO WE MAKE **THIS** TIME?

FIFTY BUCKS EACH! THAT'S THE **BEST** I COULD DO! THE **SHOKES' FAMILY** DON'T **HAVE** MUCH MONEY. I FINALLY TALKED 'EM INTO THE **TWO HUNDRED DOLLAR FUNERAL**. I CLEAR A **ROUNDUP** ON **THAT** ONE!

FIFTY BUCKS? FOR **DRYIN' OUT** LONG, IT DON'T PAY TO TAKE SUCH **CHARGES** FOR **THAT** LITTLE **DOUGH**.

WELL, **NEXT** TIME YOU **POISON** A **PRESCRIPTION**, **HAVE** SURE IT'S FOR **SOMEbody** WHO CAN **AFFORD** A **BIG** **FUNERAL**...



WHAT'D YA THINK?
I GET A CHANCE TO DO
IT EVERY DAY IN THE
NEED? I GOT TO
WAIT TILL SOMEBODY
GETS SICK FIRST...
AND NEEDS A
PRESCRIPTION FILLED!

I KNOW!
I KNOW!
DON'T
GET
SICK!



I'M NOT SURE... IN
FACT, I FEEL PRETTY
GOOD! THE NEXT
FUNERAL YOU GET
WILL BE THE BIGGEST
ONE THIS TOWN'S
EVER SEEN!

WHO'S
SICK,
MORT?



NOBODY BUT
THE RICHEST
MAN IN TOWN,
AND I DELIVERED
HIS PRESCRIPTION
THIS MORNING!

HEH, HEH!
GOOD! GOOD!
WE OUGHT TO
KNOW BY
TODAY...



OUTSIDE, THE KIDS LOOKED AT EACH OTHER, WORRIED.
THE RICHEST GUY IN
TOWN? WHY THAT'S
PERCY'S OLD MAN...

HEY, WHERE
IS PERCY?

HE'S NOT
HERE!



DO YOU THINK
HE MEANT?

I DON'T SWEAR
SO! SOLEMNLY, WHAT'LL
WE DO?

O'MON!



BILLY AND CHUBBY AND PETE TORE OUT OF THE ALLEY-
WAY BEHIND MR. ESPROCK'S MORTUARY AND RAN ALL
THE WAY TO PERCY'S HOUSE. WHEN THEY GOT THERE,
THEY FOUND PERCY SITTING ON THE FRONT STEPS,
SOBBING...

PERCY! MR. BRADY
AND MR.
ESPROCK...
HEY, WHAT'S
WROTH PERCY?

MY SOB...
MY POP! HE
DIED A LITTLE
SOB... LITTLE
WHILE AGO!

GOLIE
GEE!



THEY WERE TOO LATE. THEY STOOD AROUND ANXIOUSLY,
WONDERING WHAT TO SAY TO POOR GRIEVING PERCY, AND
THEN THEY LEFT HIM QUIETLY SOBBING...

IT'S BETTER THAT
PERCY DOESN'T KNOW
THAT MR. BRADY,
THE DRUGGIST,
POISONED HIS
OLD MAN...

... AND THAT HE'S
WORKING IN GARBOOTS
WITH MR. ESPROCK,
THE UNDERTAKER...

DO YOU
THINK WE
OUGHT TO
TELL THE
COPS?



AM, **FRED** WOULDN'T BELIEVE US ANYWAY. A COUPLE OF KIDS?

YEAH, WE GOT TO TAKE CARE OF THIS **DONKEY!**

BUT, **POOP!**



THE NEXT DAY, PETE AND BILLY AND CHUBBY WERE AT THEIR PEEP-HOLE, WATCHING MR. ESPROCK EMBLEM PERCIE'S FATHER...

HERE COMES MR. SAUGHTON!

SH-H-H-H... LISTEN...



HEH, HEH? WELL, **AMERILL**, DO YOU STYOR 'EM **ESPOCK?**

THREE BRAND WORTH? WE CLEAR **ONE THOUSAND**. THAT'S FIVE HUNDRED **APROCK!**



THAT'S MORE LIKE IT. ER... WHAT'S **BRAND**, **AMERILL?** YOU DON'T LOOK GOOD?

AM? I FEEL ALL RIGHT, **WORT?** WHT?



I DON'T **KNOW!** YOU LOOK **PALE**. **HOW** DO YOU LOOK LIKE YOU NEED A **FOOD?** I'LL SEND ONE OVER...

DON'T BOTHER. IT'S THE **EXCITEMENT**, I GUESS!



OUTSIDE, PETE GRINNED...

I JUST GOT AN **ICE!**, **PELLEN!**

TELL US **LATER**, PETE. LISTEN...



THE **FUNERAL'S** TOMORROW MORNING, **WORT**, I'LL PROBABLY GET **PAID** TOMORROW NIGHT? MEET ME AT THE **USUAL** PLACE, AND I'LL GIVE YOU **YOUR** **SHAVE**.

FINE. SAY **AROUND** **ANYTIME?**



HE'S **GONE!** WHAT'S YOUR **NAME**, **PETE?**

CHUBBY, YOU GET DOWN TO **BRUNNY'S** **DAD'S** **STORE** AND YOU **BRING** **AROUND** **IN** **FRONT**... **STAY** **THERE** **ALL** **DAY** **IF** **YOU** **HAVE** **TO!**



WHEN HE GIVES YOU A **PACKAGE** TO DELIVER TO **MR. ESPROCK**, DON'T **BRING** IT TO HIM. BRING IT TO OUR **GLIMMER**. UNDERSTAND?

RIGHT?

AFTER CHERRY LEFT, PETE TOLD HIS PLAN TO BILLY, THEN THEY WENT AROUND TO THE FRONT OF MR. ESPROCK'S MORTUARY AND WAITED. THEY WAITED UNTIL MR. ESPROCK CAME OUT.



MR. MR. ESPROCK SAY, BILLY'S WRONG?
BILLY? YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD, MR. ESPROCK!
YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD, MR. ESPROCK!

YOU LOOK PALE, MR. ESPROCK. YOU LOOK SCARY!
YOU GOING DOWN WITH SOMETHIN', MR. ESPROCK?
I DON'T KNOW! I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING TO RUN AWAY!



MR. ESPROCK WENT BACK INTO THE MORTUARY. THE KIDS DARTED AROUND TO THE BACK WINDOW IN TIME TO HEAR...



HELLO, MORTY AKEWELL! BUT MR. MAYBE YOU'D BETTER SEND THAT TONIC OVER AFTER ALL! I DO FEEL KINDA... KINDA RUN DOWN!

OUTSIDE MR. GRUDNY'S STORE, CHERRY WAITED PATIENTLY. FINALLY, MR. GRUDNY CAME OUT...



HOW DO YOU LIKE TO MAKE A BAGGEL, CHERRY? BELIEVE THIS PACKAGE OVER T' MR. ESPROCK AT THE UNDER-TAKING PARLOR...
SOME THING, MR. GRUDNY?

CHERRY TOOK THE PACKAGE AND RUSHED STRAIGHT TO THE CLUB HOUSE WITH IT. PETE AND BILLY WERE WAITING...



HERE IT IS!
GIVE, PAPA IT OUT...
HERE'S THE RAT-POISON...

MR. ESPROCK OPENED THE DOOR TO HIS MORTUARY TO SEE CHERRY STANDING BEFORE HIM, HOLDING A STRAY CAT IN ONE HAND AND THE BOTTLE OF 'TONIC' IN THE OTHER.



MR. GRUDNY ASKED ME TO DELIVER THIS, MR. ESPROCK?
OH, THANK YOU, CHERRY!

CHERRY HELD OUT THE BOTTLE OF 'TONIC', LETTING IT SLIP FROM HIS FINGERS...



HERE YARE... DOOM!
LOOK OUT, FOLK - GLASSY!

THE BOTTLE SMASHED INTO A THOUSAND GLITTERING FRAGMENTS AND THE 'TONIC' POOLED OUT OVER THE MORTUARY FLOOR. CHERRY RELEASED THE STRAY CAT...



BILLY? I'M GOING, MR. ESPROCK. I.I. HERE, KITTY?
GET THAT CAT OUT OF HERE!

THE CAT WAS RAPIDLY LAPPING UP THE SPILLED TONIC. CHERRY HESITATED...

I SAID GET THAT CAT OUT OF HERE!

LOOK, MR. ESFROCK!

THE CAT WAVERED, FILLED WITH THE RAT POISON. IT SQUEALED AND ROLLED OVER...

WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?

GOOD LORD IT'S DEAD!

MR. ESFROCK STUCK HIS FINGER INTO THE POOL OF 'TONIC' AND TASTED IT...

WHY THAT DIRTY DOUBLE-CROSSING... THIS IS POISON!

WELL, I GOT TO GO, MR. ESFROCK!

THE NEXT DAY PERCY'S FATHER'S FUNERAL WAS HELD IN A STEADY DOWNPOUR. THE BOYS WATCHED FROM AWAY...

THREE ESFROCK FELL FOR IT?

WE'LL SEE TOMORROW WHEN HE MEETS GARDNER!

LATE THAT NIGHT THE BOYS WAITED FOR MR. ESFROCK TO EMERGE FROM HIS MORTUARY. TOWARD MIDNIGHT HE CAME OUT. THEY FOLLOWED HIM AT A SAFE DISTANCE AS HE MADE HIS WAY SLOWLY OUT OF TOWN...

HE'S HEADED FOR THE CEMETERY!

W-H-WHOLEY!

C'MON!

PETE AND BILLY AND CHERRY FOLLOWED MR. ESFROCK INTO THE CEMETERY. MR. GARDNER WAS WAITING...

THAT YOU, AVERILL?

SURPRISED, BRUNO? YOU THOUGHT I'D BE DEAD BY NOW, DIDN'T YOU?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, AVERILL?

I'M TALKING ABOUT THAT POISONED TONIC YOU SENT ME, WORT. LOOK! HE'D DROPPED IT!

THE KNIFE IN MR. ESPROCK'S HAND GLINTED IN THE MOONLIGHT...

AVERRILL! DON'T YOU TRY TO BE A FOOL! YOU TRIED TO KILL ME, GRUENT WILL KILL YOU! I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!



MR. ESPROCK BROUGHT THE KNIFE DOWN INTO MR. GRUENT'S CHEST. MR. GRUENT'S SCREAM ECHOED THROUGH THE SILENT CEMETERY.



SUDDENLY THE NIGHT WAS VERY STILL, SAVE FOR AVERILL. ESPROCK'S HEART BEAT AS HE STOOD OVER MORE MR. GRUENT'S PROTECTORILY SPRAWLED BODY. AND THEN...



MR. ESPROCK SPUN AROUND, THE KNIFE GLANCED THREATENINGLY IN HIS HAND.

WHO'S THERE? I WANT LET'S RUN FOR IT!



THE BOYS BEGAN TO HAIL MR. ESPROCK SCREAMING AFTER THEM.

COME BACK O'MON, HERE, JON... I... I... I CAN'T BEEP... NOO... ANY... FASTER.



THEY RAN WILDLY OVER THE GRAVE-GROUNDS... THE THREE TERRORIZED BOYS WITH MURDEROUS MR. ESPROCK CLOSE BEHIND THEM, BRANDISHING THE BLOODY KNIFE...

JON, GRUBBY! I DON'T I'LL KILL YOU! I SWEAR IF I'M...



SUDDENLY MR. ESPROCK PLUNGED FORWARD, SPLATTERING HIS HEAD UPON THE SHARP CORNER OF A NEWLY CUT TOMBSTONE...



AND WHEN THE BOYS CAUTIOUSLY RETURNED TO WHERE HE LAY...

HE'S DEAD? LOOK! LOOK AT THE NAME ON THE HEADSTONE! IT'S PERCY'S FATHER'S GRAVE.



HEY, NOW! THERE'S A STRIKING WIND-UP TO A TERROR-TALE, ISN'T IT? NOW, THE NIGHT-KEEPER AWAITS WITH HIS TALE OF GUFFINS AND GADGERS, SO I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO HIM. I'LL DO YOU LATER, TALKING 'BOUT DIGGING, AS THE FRENCH BEE-BOPPER SAID WHEN HE SAW THE GUILLOTINE.



'MAN, DID THAT CRAZY BARBER CHASE!'

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH, AND NOW, VULGARIES, IF YOU WILL VENTURE INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, YOUR HOST, THE VAULT-KEEPER WILL ENTERTAIN YOU. FOR THIS, MY FINAL FICTIONAL PLUNG, I HAVE CHOSEN A **GRAVE TALE**. YEP? IT'S TOLD BY A **GRAVE**? NO, GUGGLE UP TO THAT CORPSE OVER THERE AND I'LL BEGIN THE DRAMA OF DREAD AND DEATH CALLED...

THE CRAVING GRAVE!



THE WIND BLOWS SADLY ACROSS THE CHARLED AND BENT TREES AROUND ME. IT WHISPERS PAST THE COLD STONE MONUMENTS THAT THE OTHERS PROUDLY HOLD UPWARD TOWARD THE NIGHT SKY. BUT UPON MY BREAST THERE IS NO COLD STONE FOR THE WIND TO BING OVER. I LIE SILENT WITH AN EMPTINESS WITHIN ME... A TEARING. THE OTHERS SIGH CONTENTEDLY, SHIFTING AND CRACKING, EMBRACING THEIR CHARGES... THEIR RIGID CHILDREN... BUT I AM BARREN... FRUITLESS. BENEATH MY WOUNDED OUTER SKIN-CRUST, NO RIGID CHARGE LIES, RESTING. I AM **LOVELY**. I AM **WAITING**...



I AM AN **UNOCCUPIED GRAVE**, CRYING WITH THE CRYING WIND... WAITING FOR MY LONELINESS TO END...
WAITING FOR A **BOO!**

I HAVE WAITED LIKE THIS THROUGH THE CENTURIES, WATCHING THE OTHERS AROUND ME, EACH IN THEIR TURN, OPEN WIDE THEIR YARNING MOUTHS AND TAKE IN THEIR WARDS, CRAWLING THEM HAPPY WITHIN THEIR EARTH-WOMES.



LOWER THE COFFIN...

SOB... SOB...

ON NIGHTS LIKE THIS ONE... WHEN THE SKY IS OVERCAST WITH LOW HANGING RAIN-CLOUDS, WHEN I CAN SEE NO STARS... I CAN ONLY LIE AND LISTEN TO THE HAPPY CHATTERING OF THE BAYERS AROUND ME GUARDING, PROTECTING, CARING FOR THEIR BROOD. I CAN ONLY LIE AND LISTEN AND YEARN. I YEARN FOR THE DAY WHEN I, TOO, WILL REACH FORTH AND DRAW IN MY DEATH-RETTUS AND HOLD IT FAST, BUCKLING IT WITH MY DAMPNESS.



HERE IT IS, WILLIE.

LET'S GET TO IT, AL. NOT MUCH TIME LEFT TILL MORNING!

BUT, WAIT? WHAT IS THAT I HEAR?? VOICES IN THE WIND... VOICES OVER MY? AND WHAT IS THAT I FEEL?? COLD STEEL PENTING MY CHEST... CRACKING OPEN MY EARTH-SOIL...



WHY? WHY DON'T PEOPLE DIE IN THE DOWNPOURING... WHEN THE GROUND IS SOFT??

I'LL TELL MY DOWNPOUR-MAN THEY'LL PASS A LEAF!

I HAVE LAIN FALLOW THROUGH THE FREEZER AND THE THAW, HEARING THEM MARRING THEIR FOSTER-CHILDREN, AND LONGING FOR MY OWN. ON SUNDAYS, I HAVE LISTENED TO THE MOURNERS AND REMEMBERS COME AND CRY UPON THE OTHERS AND PLACE FLOWERS UPON THEIR BODIES.



SOB... SOB...

HE WAS A GOOD MAN...

AND ALWAYS, WHEN THE WIND COMES UP ACROSS THE OTHER GRAVES, IT CARRIES THEIR LAUGHTER TO ME. THEY LAUGH BECAUSE THEY HAVE FULFILLED THEIR PURPOSE. THEY LAUGH BECAUSE THEY ARE NO LONGER EMPTY AND BARREN AND CHILDLESS. THEY LAUGH AT ME...



USE 'EM HARD AS A ROCK!

HERE, USE THE PICK...

THERE IS A TROWLING DOWN DEEP WITHIN ME... A SURGE OF EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION. THE WIND DIES... AND THE LAUGHTER DIES...



HOW OLD WAS SHE?

SIXTY-THREE...

ALL THESE YEARS OF WAITING... ALL THESE YEARS OF LONGING AND YEARNING AND CRYING... THEY'RE ALMOST OVER. THOSE MEN UPON MY CHEST... THEY'RE BAWDY DIS-BERS...



AND NOW IT IS MORNING. I LIE WITH MY INSIDES TORN FROM ME AND HEAPED UP AT MY SIDE. I LIE OPEN, FEELING THE SUNLIGHT. THE COLD AIR. I HEAR THE CRUNCHING STEPS THAT I HAVE HEARD SO OFTEN. HEAR THE GRUNTS OF THE FALLBEARERS THAT HAVE NEVER UNTIL THIS DAY DELIVERED UNTO ME... AND I SMILE.



THE COFFIN IS LOWERED. I REACH UPWARD FOR IT, ACCEPTING IT, FEELING OF ITS SMOOTHNESS, AND SENSING OF ITS CONTENTS... MY DEATH-WARD. MY CORPSE-SHARE... MY OWN.



THE GRAVE DIGGERS TRUDGE OFF. I AM FULFILLED. THE EMPTESS WITHIN ME IS GONE... THE YEARNING VANISHED. THE BODY LIES GUARDED INSIDE ME. I WHISPER TO IT... SOOTHING IT. COMFORTING IT IN ITS FINAL REST.



THE DAYS AND WEEKS PASS. BUT THE BODY WITHIN MY FOLD DOES NOT LIE AT REST. THE BODY WITHIN ME IS NOT AT PEACE. THERE IS A STIRRING INSIDE THE COFFIN NESTLING IN MY BOSOM. A FLUTTERING... A SCRATCHING.



I LISTEN WITH A DRUNKEN JOY TO THE CEREMONY, FEELING THE MOURNERS' FEET UPON MY BREAST. THERE ARE NOT MANY MOURNERS... A MOTHER, HIS WIFE, AND A LAWYER-FRIEND. BUT I DO NOT CARE. IT IS NOT THE ~~SPACIOUS~~ ONES I AM INTERESTED IN. IT IS THE ONE FOR WHOM THEY GRIEVE.



THE MOURNERS LEAVE. THE GRAVE DIGGERS STEP FORWARD WITH THEIR SHOVELS. I EMBRACE THE COFFIN MORE AND MORE AS THEY RETURN MY SOIL-REMAINS TO ME. THEY STAND, FINALLY, UPON MY REPAIRED BODY, TAMING DOWN MY OUTER SKIN, STITCHING UP THE WOUND.



THE BODY TELLS ME HER STORY. HER NAME IS CYNTHIA MEADOWS. SHE WAS, LIKE ME, LONELY ALL HER LIFE. SHE'D REMAINED UNMARRIED... BARREN, FRUITLESS... YEARNING FOR THE THING HER MARRIED SISTER HAD.



THE BOSS STIRRING WITHIN ME TELLS ME OF THE LONELY YEARS... THE LONGING SHE'D FELT FOR A CHILD OF HER OWN, AND I UNDERSTAND, HADN'T I FELT THE SAME AS SHE?

MAMA SAYS YOU'RE AN OLD MAID, AUNT CYNTHIA. WHAT'S AN OLD MAID?

IT'S... IT'S A WOMAN WHO NEVER MARRIES, ROLAND, A WOMAN WHO HAS NO CHILDREN OF HER OWN.



SHE'D FELT THE LAUGHTER... THE SCORN AROUND HER AS I'D FELT SCORN. SHE'D WATCHED THE OTHER WOMEN SHE KNEW MARRY AND HAVE CHILDREN, AND SHE'D GRIEVED AS I'D GRIEVED...

SOR—SOR—

HURRY, EDITH! DINNER'S READY!

YES, MOTHER!



AND THE EMPTY YEARS HAD CRAWLED BY. AS THEY CRAWLED FOR ME, SHE MADE WISE INVESTMENTS OF THE INHERITANCE SHE'D SHARED WITH HER SISTER, AND SHE'S GROWN WEALTHY, WHILE HER SISTER...

AND SHE'S WAITED THROUGH THE YEARS... AS I'D WAITED. FINALLY...

GEORGE'S BUSINESS FAILED, CYNTHIA. HE'S LOST EVERY CENT WE HAD!

I'M SORRY, MYRA. I'LL TRY TO HELP YOU!



WHAT IS IT, GEORGE?

IT'S MYRA, CYNTHIA. SHE'S *DESPERATELY* ILL. PLEASE...*COME, QUICKLY!*



MYRA'S FALLEN ILL SUDDENLY, SHE'D DIED WITHIN THE WEEK...

AND SO, THE LONELY YEARS HAD ENDED FOR CYNTHIA AS MY LONELY YEARS HAD ENDED. SHE'D TAKEN ROLAND TO HER BOSOM AS I'D TAKEN HER...

ROLAND'S ARRIVAL IN CYNTHIA'S HOUSE HAD MEANT THE END OF THE LAUGHTER AROUND HER, THE END OF SCORN... JUST AS *HER* ARRIVAL HAD MEANT THE END OF SCORN FOR ME...

WHAT, SOB. WHAT ABOUT A ROLAND, CYNTHIA? WHAT WILL I DO WITH HIM?

I'LL... I'LL LOOK AFTER HIM, GEORGE... IF YOU WANT ME TO.



BUT I WANT MY MOTHER!

YOU MOTHER HAS GONE AWAY, ROLAND. SHE'S GONE AWAY FOR A LONG TIME.



ROLAND? DINNER'S READY, MOTHER.

YES, AUNT CYNTHIA!



CYNTHIA, TOO, HAD BEEN FULFILLED. SHE'D GUARDED ROLAND COMFORTED HIM, AND HE'D SUNK INTO MANKHOOD. BUT THERE WAS A STIRRING WITHIN HIM... JUST AS NOW, CYNTHIA STIRS.



I'M GOING AWAY, AUNT CYNTHIA. I CAN'T STAY HERE ANY LONGER.

ROLAND? DON'T LEAVE ME! PLEASE.

THE SCRATCHING, CLAWING BODY WITHIN ME TELLS HOW ROLAND HAD LEFT HER. DESPITE HER PLEADING... LEFT HER TO THE LAUGHTER AND THE SCORN AROUND HER ONCE MORE...



AND THEN SHE'D DISCOVERED WHY ROLAND HAD LEFT SO SUDDENLY...

POOR CYNTHIA. HOW SORRY I FEEL FOR HER... TO YEARN FOR SOMETHING... TO YEARN FOR IT FOR SO LONG... TO FINALLY GET IT... AND THEN TO LOSE IT ONCE MORE. SHE TELLS ME OF HOW BROKEN-HEARTED SHE WAS.

SHE TELLS ME HOW SHE'D TRIED TO FORGET HIM. SHE TELLS ME HOW HER INVESTMENTS HAD CONTINUED TO MAKE HER WEALTHIER AND WEALTHIER. AND THEN... SIX YEARS LATER...



THE MONEY? I HAD THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS IN THIS DRAWER. IT'S GONE?



ROLAND. SOB. ROLAND.



YES, WHO IS IT? WHO... ROLAND? YOU'VE COME BACK!

YES, AUNT CYNTHIA. AND I'VE BROUGHT SOMEONE.

CYNTHIA'D BEEN SO GLAD TO SEE ROLAND SHE'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN THE CRIME HE'D COMMITTED WHEN HE'S LEFT...

THEY'D COME TO LIVE WITH HER. ROLAND'D BOGGED CYNTHIA'S FORGIVENESS.



THIS IS MY WIFE ERIS, AUNT CYNTHIA. ERIS, THIS IS MY AUNT CYNTHIA...

ROLAND'S TOLD ME SO MUCH ABOUT YOU, AUNT CYNTHIA!



I WAS FOOLISH AND FOOLISH, AUNT CYNTHIA. IT WAS WRONG OF ME TO TAKE THE MONEY! I'M SORRY!

THERE, THERE, ROLAND. IT HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO!

SO ONCE MORE THE LAUGHTER AND BOON AROUND CYNTHIA'S DIED AWAY. ROLAND HAD COME BACK AND HE'S BROUGHT HIS WIFE. CYNTHIA HAD TWO CHILDREN NOW...



YOU DON'T KNOW HOW HAPPY YOU'VE MADE AN OLD LONELY WOMAN, ERIC... ROLAND?

WE BOTH LOVE YOU, AUNT CYNTHIA!

YES, AUNT CYNTHIA.

BUT THEN CYNTHIA TELLS ME WHAT ROLAND AND ERIC HAD PLANNED.



ONCE WE GET HER TO MAKE OUT A WILL LEAVING ALL OF HER DOBBER TO US...

WE JUDGE HER OFF?

AND NOW I KNOW WHY THE BODY I EMBRACE WITHIN MY EARTH-WOMB IS NOT AT PEACE. NOW I KNOW WHY IT SCRATCHES AND STINGS INSIDE. CYNTHIA MESSORS HAD BEEN MURDERED...



THE BODY WITHIN ME TURNS AND PUSHES AND SCRATCHES I TRY TO STOP IT. TRY TO MAKE MY INSIDES HARD... BUT IT IS DETERMINED. THEN, ONE NIGHT... MONTHS AFTER I HAD FIRST EMBRACED IT... THE BODY PUNES UPWARD INTO THE COOL AIR... PUSHING OUTWARD PART MY CRUST-SKIN.



HER NIECE AND NEPHEW HAD PUSHED HER DOWN A LONG FLIGHT OF CELLAR STAIRS. THEY'D TOLD THE DOCTOR...



WE HEARD HER SCREAM AND FALL! WE CAME AS FAST AS WE COULD! WHEN WE GOT HERE... SHE...

WHAT A HORRIBLE ACCIDENT! SOB...

SHE'S... SHE'S DEAD!

DESPITE MY PLEADING, IT TOTTERS OFF...ACROSS THE OTHER GRAVES...INTO THE COOL WIND...THE WIND THAT CARRIES BACK TO ME ONCE AGAIN THE LAUGHTER AND SCORN OF THE OTHERS...



AND WITHIN ME THERE IS AN EMPTINESS AND A YEARNING ONCE MORE. I AM LONELY ONCE MORE.

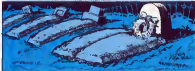
WE WERE THE **DEAD**, CYNTHIA AND I... **BARKEN** AND **FRUITLESS** AND **WALTON**. AND THEN THE WAITING ENDED FOR BOTH OF US. **ROLAND** WAS GIVEN TO HER, AND SHE TO ME. BUT LIKE **ROLAND** LEFT CYNTHIA, AND THE LAUGHTER AND THE SCORN, SHE TOO HAD LEFT ME. NOW, I CAN ONLY DO AS SHE DID... TRY TO FORGET.



IT IS CYNTHIA. SHE HOLDS THEM IN HER VICE-LIKE GRIP AND STRAGGLES ACROSS THE OTHER GRAVES... THE OTHER GRAVES THAT HAVE SUDDENLY STOPPED LAUGHING. SHE HOLDS THEM... **ROLAND** AND **ENIG**... HOLDS THEM OUT TO ME...



CYNTHIA IS SOME AWAY NOW. THE SCREAMING HAS STOPPED. YES, WE WERE ALIVE, SHE AND I. EACH WAITED—EACH GOT WHAT SHE WAITED FOR... ONLY TO LOSE IT AGAIN. BUT WHAT WE LOST WAS EVENTUALLY RETURNED TO US. **ROLAND'S** AND **ENIG'S** TRUSTED SUFFOCATED BODIES LIE DEEP WITHIN ME, PRESSED AGAINST MY EARTH-BEDDOW. AND NOW IT IS I WHO CAN LAUGH... **LAUGH AT THE OTHERS**...



...FOR NOW I KNOW MY **REAL** FULFILLMENT. I WANTN'T **LIKE** THE OTHERS **AFTER** ALL, THEY'RE ALL **SCORPE** GRAVES, I AM A **DOUBLE** ONE!

THE WIND BLOWS SLOWLY ACROSS THE UNRAILED AND BENT TREES AROUND ME. IT WHISPERS PAST THE COLD STONES I LIE SILENT WITH THE EMPTINESS WITHIN ME, AND I WAIT. AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, FAR AWAY... I HEAR IT: THE SCREAMING...



SOMETHING IS COMING TOWARD ME, DRAGGING THE SCREAMING BEHIND IT...

...AND I REACH FOR THEM. CYNTHIA HELPS ME REACH. SHE SHOVES ASIDE MY SKIN-CRUST, SCODOPS OUT MY INSIDES, PUSHES THEM, SHRIEKING, INTO MY EMBRACE...



PEH, HEH. AND SO, KISSSES... OUR LITTLE **BE JECOM-BODD** ENDS ON THIS GRAVE NOTE. **ROLAND** AND **ENIG** WERE PUNISHED FOR THEIR CRIME... **BORIED** ALIVE... BY CYNTHIA'S CORPSE, AND OUR LITTLE GRAVE BOTTED THEM **HAPPILY** EVER AFTER. SO NOW... **HONP** WHERE'S CYNTHIA THESE DAYS, YOU ASK? WHY SHE JUST WANDERED AROUND TILL SHE FOUND SOME **OTHER** LONESOME GRAVE AND DRAPPED IN ON HER FOR AN EXTENDED VISIT 'BYE, NOW!



THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

BECAUSE I HAVE RECEIVED SUCH A FLOOD OF REQUESTS (ONE THE EDITOR'S MOTHER-IN-LAW!) I HAVE DECIDED TO TELL YOU ANOTHER INFANTILE INSANITY. AFTER CAREFUL AND INTENSE RESEARCH, I HAVE DISCOVERED THE TRUE FACTS BEHIND THE GRIM FAIRY TALE ABOUT THE PRINCESS WHO SLEPT ALL THOSE YEARS. YOU KNOW... THE ONE CALLED...

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY!



ONCE UPON A TIME, LONG, LONG AGO, IN A KINGDOM FAR AWAY... EVEN FURTHER THAN BROOKLYN, MAYBE... THERE STOOD A CASTLE, COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY A HIGH IMPENET... IMPENETRA... IMPENETRA... IT WAS A THICK GROWTH OF BRAMBLES, ALL THORNY AND WHAT-NOT, AND TO THIS CASTLE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY THE IMPENET... IMPENET... THE STUFF, CAME A PRINCE...

PARDON ME, MY GOOD MAN... WHAT PLACE IS THIS?

HUH?



I SAID, WHAT PLACE IS THAT? WHO REMEMBERS IN YOUR PALACE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY THAT IMPENET... IMPENET... THAT BRAMBLES FOREST?

SO WHO WANTS TO KNOW?





SO, IT IS *J*... THE HERO OF THIS MISERABLE FICTION... CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING!

PLEASED I'M MEET YOU? I'M MELVIN!



MELVIN??



LIKE I SAID, MELVIN... WHO RESIDES IN YOUR CASTLE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY THAT THORNY OVERGROWN?

BEYOND THAT INFERNAL... THAT INFERNAL... THAT INFERNAL... JUNGLE SLOOPS THE SLEEPING BEAUTY SLEEPING!



AND THE SLEEPING BEAUTY... KISS DANSEL IN DISTRESS... AWAITING HER RESCUE... WHICH I WILL FORESWITH CARRY OUT!

CAN I, BUTTER! THAT BRAMBLE BUSH IS IMPENETRABLE... IMPNET... IT'S THICK!



FEAR NOT, MY GOOD MAN... I, CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING, WILL HER MY WAY THROUGH THAT GORTH, WITH THIS.

SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD PLAN... BRINY AND CRICKETS... A SOLID GOLD-PLATED BOY SCOUT KNIFE!



WHICH I DETAILED BY TEASING OFF THE TOP FROM A LADIE SUEE COAT AND BENDING IT ALONG WITH MY BLAME AND ADDRESS...

THE DUFFY GUIDES... THEY NEVER SENT ME NONE!



TELL ME, MY GOOD MAN... WHAT IS THE LEGEND OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTY?

AND THE SQUARE? HE DON'T KNOW THE LEGEND!



WHY DOES THE SLEEPING BEAUTY SLEEP?

WHAT A DREEP! EVERYBODY KNOWS THE STORY OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTY!



SO?

SO HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

ISN'T IT *TRUE*, MY GOOD MAN, THAT MANY YEARS AGO, A *KING* AND *QUEEN* LIVED IN THAT CASTLE?



AND THE KING AND QUEEN WANTED A *CHILD*. VERY *BADLY*.



AND FINALLY, THE QUEEN PRESENTED THE KING WITH A BOUNCING *BABY* GIRL.



THE KING WAS SO OVERLAPSED WITH HIS NEW PRINCESS, THAT HE ISSUED AN INVITATION...

HERE IS A LIST OF *EVERYBODY* WHO IS *ANYBODY*. INVITE THEM TO A *FEAST*... IN HONOR OF MY *NEW DAUGHTER*.



THE *VIL*'S OF THE KINGDOM FLOCKED TO THE *FEAST*... FEARED TO THE *FLOST*...ER. THEY CAME TO *EAT*...



BUT THE KING, WHO WAS A *FORGETFUL* KING, HAD FORGOTTEN TO INVITE ONE *THE WHEEL*...



THIS *SH-WHEEL* WAS FIT TO BE *TWIRLED*. BUT ITS *TWIRL* TWIRLED *WHEEL*'S TIRE ON THE *WHEEL*'S ON, NEVER *WIND*! ANYWAY, THIS *SH-WHEEL* ROLLED IN AT THE HEIGHT OF THE *FESTIVITIES*...

YOU WANT A *PREDICTION*, KING BRINGING *ALL* *RIGHT*? I'LL *GIVE* YOU ONE... THE *PRINCESS* WILL *DIE* ON HER *EIGHTEENTH* BIRTHDAY...



EVERYONE AT THE *FEAST* WAS *SHOCKED* AT THE *PREDICTION* OF THE *SH-SHUT* WHO *HASNT* *WANTED*.



BUT A *THOUGHTFUL* *V.I.P.* CALMED THE *HORRIFIED* GATHERING BY *PUTTING* IN *HER* *TWO* *CENTS*...

ON HER *EIGHTEENTH* BIRTHDAY, THE *PRINCESS* WILL *NOT* *DIE*, BUT WILL *GO* TO *SLEEP*.



ALL *C'MON* *ETHEL*, THE *PARTY* IS *GETTING* *REAL* *DULL*!



UNTIL A COURAGEOUS PRINCE WILL KISS HER WITH HIS KISS OF LOVE! HE'LL KISS HER AND KISS HER... AND KISS HER... AND KISS HER... AND...

ALL ALREADY!



AND SO IT CAME TO PASS THAT THE BABY PRINCESS GREW UP TO BECOME A LUSCIOUS CHICK THAT ANYBODY WOULD WANT TO HUG AND KISS...

TOMORROW IS YOUR EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY, WIFE!

I'M NO CHILD OF FORTUNE! I'M A SHOWN WOMAN! LOOK AT ME! LOOK!



LISTEN, WOMAN! TOMORROW IS YOUR EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY! NOW I WANT YOU TO STAY IN YOUR ROOM! MORROW SLEEPING ROOMS HERE!

LOOK AT ME! LOOK!



BUT THE NEXT DAY THE KING AND QUEEN DISCOVERED THEIR DAUGHTER ASLEEP! YOU LADY... GET UP!



IRVING! SHE'S DEAD!

NO! WAIT! SHE IS ASLEEP! THE PROPHETION HAS COME TRUE!



LOOK, IRVING! OUTSIDE THE CASTLE!

BRAMBLES HAVE GROWN UP OVERNIGHT, CREATING AN IMPENETRABLE WALL OF THORNS...



HOW WILL WE GET OUT? HOW WILL THE DELIVERY MAN GET IN? WE'LL STARVE!

WHAT ABOUT MY BUSINESS?



THE PRINCE SLEEPS BRAVE MELVIN, CLOSING AND UNCLASPING HIS SOLID GOLD-PLATED BOY SCOUT SHIRT...

ISN'T THAT THE STORY, MY GOOD MAN?

CORRECT! YOU HAVE NOW THIRTY-TWO DUCATS! WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY FOR SIXTY-FOUR?



AND ISN'T IT TRUE THAT ONE PRINCE CHANGING AFTER ANOTHER HAS TRIED TO HEW HIS WAY THROUGH THE BRAMBLES HERE?

YES AND THEY ALL WERE SAUGHT AND DIED HORRIBLE DEATHS... IMPALED UPON THE SHARP THORNS!

THE PRINCE STOOD UP, SQUARE AND STRONG.

THAT'S BECAUSE NONE OF THEM HAS A SOLID GOLD-PLATED BOY SCOUT KNIFE!



THE PRINCE TURNED TO THE BRAMBLES.

IT IS LATE! SOON IT WILL BE DARK! I MUST HURRY!

'BYE! HAPPY HEAVEN!'



THE BRAVE PRINCE STRUCK OFF INTO THE THICK GROWTH OF THORNY BRAMBLES.

SEE HOW THE LETHALLY ARMED BRANCHES FALL BEFORE THE KEEN BLADE OF MY TRUSTY SOLID GOLD-PLATED BOY SCOUT KNIFE.



HOUR AFTER HOUR, HE HICKED.

WELL, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? IT'S A HACK STORY!



... TIME AND TIME AGAIN, HE PASSED CROOKED-UP, DRIEVELED, MUMMIFIED BODIES OF PRINCE CHARMING WHO HAD WAIRLY ATTEMPTED TO REACH THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

CHORE...



... THE SUN WAS JUST BEGINNING TO SET WHEN CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING REACHED THE CASTLE DOOR.

ONE MORE HACK! AND I'LL BE THROUGH.



EDITOR'S NOTE! ONE MORE HACK! KAFK! LIKE THIS AND WE'LL ALL BE THROUGH.

FINALLY, THE PRINCE BRINGS OPEN THE CASTLE DOOR.

SLEEPING BEAUTY? I AM HERE!



BREATHLESSLY, HE RUSHED FROM ROOM TO ROOM.

SLEEPING BEAUTY? WHERE ARE YOU?



AND THEN...

OH! THE SLEEPING BEAUTY... SLEEPING!



CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING
STOOD BEFORE THE SLEEPING
SLEEPING BEAUTY...



WAW! WHAT A BEAUTY!

SLOWLY HE BENT AND KISSED HER



OUTSIDE, THE SUN HAD SET. THE
SLEEPING BEAUTY FLUTTERED HER
EYELIDS... OPENED HER EYES...



IT IS I, SLEEPING BEAUTY!
I HAVE AWOKED YOU!

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY GOT UP...



ALL THESE YEARS, YOU SUCKERS!
HAVE SLEPT, UNTIL
I...

WOW!



ONLY IN THE DAY-
TIME DO I SLEEP,
CHIM!

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY LEAPED
FROM HER BED...



AT NIGHT, I'M WIDE AWAKE!
I DO DAYTIME THAT IMPENET...
IMPENETRA... THAT BESS OUT
THERE AND FIND THE SUCKERS
WHO ARE TRAPPED IN IT...

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY'S FISTS
CLATTERED...



AND I DRINK THEIR BLOOD!
FOR YOU SEE...

... AS SHE SLUNG THEM INTO
CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING'S
THROAT...



I'M A SNAKE...
SUCKER...

GOOD
LORD!

WELL, THAT'S UP CHILDREN
COOLER TO A THER BRIDE, CREEPS
HOPE YOU LIKED MY HARBESTIVE
NURSE BY NOVELLETTE? AND NOW
I SMELL THE OLD WITCH'S POT
SPENDING. THE OLD
GAL IS WANTING
TO FEED YOU
FOUL FARE
AND WIND UP
MY REEF-
RAG SO I'LL
BE SHOVELLING
ALONG! READY?
HOLD HOSE!
EYES...
RIGHT...



THE END

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HIE, HEE! AND NOW IT'S WIND-UP TIME IN C.R.'S BLOOD-BAG, AND YOUR HOSTESS IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR, YOUR STEWARD OF SCARY STORIES, YOUR DISHER-OUTER OF DELICIOUS DESSERTS, THE OLD WITCH, IS READY WITH HER BECKING CAULDRON. SO TUCK YOUR DROOL DUMPS UNDER YOUR SUPERIOR CHIN AND I'LL BEER THE FOOL FARE I CALL...

SHADOW OF DEATH

COME WITH ME TO A LONELY CORNER IN THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SECTION OF A LARGE CITY. OVERHEAD, THE LAST FADING STAR IS FINALLY RETREATING BEFORE THE ADVANCING LIGHT OF DAWN, AND THE SLEEPING CITY IS AWAKENING TO THE SOUNDS OF JANGLING ALARM CLOCKS. BUT LONG BEFORE THE CITY'S OFFICE WORKERS AND BUSY HOUSEWIVES HAVE RISEN FROM THEIR WARM BEDS, EZRA WORTON HAS BEEN ON THE JOB. THERE HE IS NOW, UNLOCKING HIS LITTLE NEWSSTAND AND SWINGING WIDE ITS DOORS. NOTICE HOW EZRA LABORS, WINCING IN PAIN. YES, DEAR READER, EZRA IS AN INVALID - A CRIPPLED NEWSDEALER. EZRA WORTON IS PARALYZED FROM THE WAIST DOWN.



NOTICE THE BUNDLES OF MORNING NEWSPAPERS STACKED ON THE CURB BESIDE EZRA'S NEWSSTAND, READY TO BE UNTIED AND LAID OUT NEATLY ON DISPLAY. SEE HOW EZRA STRUGGLES, BENDING IN HIS WHEELCHAIR AND LIFTING THE HEAVY PACKAGES...



NOW SEE THE DARK AND DESERTED SUBWAY KIOSK NEARBY, INTO WHICH, IN A FEW MINUTES, THE OFFICE-BOUND SECRETARIES AND THE FACTORY-BOUND LABORERS WILL BEGIN TO FLOW, ARMED WITH THE NEWSPAPERS THEY HAVE PURCHASED FROM EZRA'S STAND.



YES, DEAR READER: EZRA SMILES. HE SMILES BECAUSE HE IS CONTENT. FOR THIS IS HIS LIFE! ALL THAT MATTERS TO HIM, THIS LITTLE NEWSSTAND, WITH ITS FEW HUNDRED DAILY PAPER SALES, IS EZRA'S CASTLE. ITS READER PROFIT IS THE LINE DRAWN BETWEEN INDEPENDENCE AND STARVATION FOR HIM. SO EZRA SMILES. BUT EZRA DOES NOT SMILE FOR LONG! SUDDENLY EZRA CATCHES SIGHT OF A FIGURE STRAGGLING NEAR THE SUBWAY KIOSK.



AND NOW THE PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO HURRY FROM ALL DIRECTIONS TOWARD THE SUBWAY ENTRANCE AND THE BIG MAN WITH THE PAPERS UNDER HIS ARMS HURRIES TO MEET THEM ON STRONG LEGS THAT ARE NOT WITHERED AND PARALYZED AS EZRA'S ARE...



NOW, EZRA IS READY FOR THEM... FOR THE PARADE OF HUMANITY TO PUSH BY HIS STAND AND TOSS ITS COPPER PENNIES UPON HIS PAPERWEIGHTS AND EAT AWAY AT THE STACKS UNTIL ONLY A FEW LAST BATTERED COPIES REMAIN. SEE HOW HE SMILES.



...A MAN CLUTCHING A STACK OF NEWSPAPERS UNDER HIS HUGE ARM.



YES, EZRA DOES NOT SMILE. FEAR GRIPS EZRA'S HELPLESS BODY. THAT MAN, THAT MAN WITH THE PAPERS AND THE HEALTHY LEGS IS STEALING PAPER SALES THAT ORDINARILY WOULD BE EZRA'S!



EZRA BEGINS TO DO WHAT HE HAS NEVER DONE BEFORE. HE CALLS OUT, TRYING TO ATTRACT ATTENTION, CALLING FOR SALES, IMPLORING, REMINDING THE MASS OF HUMANITY WITH HEALTHY LEGS THAT IT HAS ALWAYS BOUGHT ITS PAPERS FROM HIM.



AND NOW, THE MORNING RUSH HOUR IS ALMOST OVER. EZRA'S PAPER STACKS STAND HIGH AND HAROLY TOUCHED, THE MAN WITH THE HEALTHY LEGG WAVES TO EZRA.



THE MAN MOVES OFF. EZRA STARES AT THE UNSOLD PAPERS PILED UPON HIS NEWSPAPER COUNTER.



BUT THE SLEEPY-EYED PEOPLE ARE BLIND. IN THEIR RUSH TO CATCH THEIR TRAINS, THEY DO NOT NOTICE THAT THEY ARE BUYING THEIR MORNING PAPERS FROM SOMEONE NEW.



ALL DAY LONG, EZRA SITS IN HIS WHEELCHAIR TRYING TO SELL HIS PAPERS TO THE FEW WHO STRAGGLE BY HIS STAND.



FINALLY, DARKNESS BEGINS TO FALL. SADLY, EZRA TIES HIS UNSOLD PAPERS INTO BUNDLES AND DEPOSITS THEM ON THE CURB FOR THE TRACKS TO PICK UP WHEN THEY DELIVER THE NEXT DAY'S EDITIONS.



THE NEXT MORNING THE MAN IS THERE AGAIN, HURRYING ABOUT ON HIS STRONG LEGS SELLING HIS PAPERS TO THE UNAWAY PARADE, WHILE EZRA CRIES IN SILENCE.



THE DAYS PASS. EVERY MORNING THE MAN IS THERE, STEALING SALES FROM EZRA. AND EVERY NIGHT, EZRA COUNTS HIS UNSOLD PAPERS AND TIES THEM INTO BUNDLES.



I'LL... I'LL NEVER MAKE ENOUGH TO LIVE ON THIS WAY!

BUT WHAT CAN EZRA DO? WHAT CAN A CRIPPLE DO TO A MAN WITH A HEALTHY STRONG BODY? THE TRUCKMAN LEAVES. EZRA BITES WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS...



IF I WEREN'T PARALYZED... IF I WEREN'T CRIPPLED AND HELPLESS... IF I WERE STRONG, I'D SHOW HIM! I'D...

ABOVE, THE SKY IS JUST BEGINNING TO GLOW WITH NEARBY STREETLAMP LIGHTS. EZRA'S SHADOW LIFTS AGAINST HIS NEWSSTAND.



I'D... SOB... SOB... I'D...

A WEEK GOES BY. TWO. ONE MORNING, A TRUCKMAN WHO DELIVERS EZRA'S PAPERS WARNS HIM.



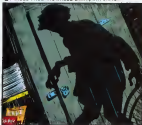
IF YOU CAN'T SELL MORE PAPERS THAN THIS, EZRA, WE'LL GOT YOU OUT OF OUR DELIVERY ROUTE.

I'LL... I'LL TRY. I'LL DO SOMETHING!

SUDDENLY, EZRA'S SHADOW LIFTS ITS HEAD FROM ITS HANDS...



IT RISES FROM ITS WHEEL CHAIR, WAVERING...



IT SLIDES OFF, DOWN THE DESERTED STREET, ON UNSTEADY LEGS...



IT SLIDES ACROSS BRICK WALLS...



BOARD FENCES...



...HESITATES BEFORE A HARDWARE STORE...



IT REACHES IN, PLUCKING THE SHADOW OF THE AXE
HANGING IN THE WINDOW...



...LIFTING AWAY THE SHADOW OF THE SHOVEL, STANDING
BEHIND THE WINDOW TOOLS...



...BACK ACROSS BOARD FENCES...



...BACK ACROSS BRICK WALLS...



...TO A FAMILIAR CORNER WHERE A
FAMILIAR SHADOW STANDS WITH THE
SHADOW OF A HUGE BUNDLE OF
PAPERS UNDER ITS ARMS...



EDRA'S SHADOW LIFTS THE SHADOW OF THE AXE IT HAS STOLEN.



... AND BRINGS IT DOWN UPON THE FAMILIAR SHADOW WITH THE PAPERS UNDER ITS ARMS.



THE SHADOWS OF THE PAPERS SCATTER ACROSS THE BUILDING WALL AS THE FIGURE CRUMPLES, SPLATting A SHADOW-FOUNTAIN FROM ITS WOUND.



EDRA'S SHADOW PEERS AT IT. THE CRUMPLED SHADOW STIRS. EDRA'S SHADOW LIFTS THE AXE SHADOW ONCE MORE.



NOW EDRA'S SHADOW DRAGS THE LIFELESS SHADOW DOWN THE ALLEY BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS.



... DEPOSITING IT IN AN EMPTY LOT BESIDE A FADING BILLBOARD.



WITH THE SHADOW-SHOVEL, EDRA'S SHADOW Digs A SHALLOW SHADOW-GRAVE BESIDE THE BILLBOARD.



...AND PUSHES THE LIFELESS SHADOW IN.



...AND SHOVELS THE SHADOW-SOIL IN UPON IT...

THEN, EDRA'S SHADOW RETURNS TO THE NEWSSTAND WHERE EDRA STILL SITS WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS...



...AND EDRA'S SHADOW ASSUMES EDRA'S POSITION AS EDRA HEARS...



EDRA ROLLS HIS WHEELCHAIR TO THE CRUMPLED FORM OF THE BIG MAN WITH THE HEALTHY LEGS LYING AMONG HIS SCATTERED PAPERS...



LATER, THE MORGUE-WAGON ATTENDANTS LIFT THE BODY OF THE MAN WHO ALMOST STOLE EDRA'S BUSINESS FROM HIM. AS THEY CARRY IT TO THE WAITING TRUCK, EDRA GASPS.



WHICH IS THE NEAREST TRICK OF THE TRADE, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? WELL, THAT'S MY REVOLVING RECIPE FOR THIS ISSUE, DREDD. NOW IT'S TIME TO PUT OUT THE FIRE UNDER MY POT AND CLOSE THE DOORS TO THE HALL OF FEAR, SO TUCKLE ALONG. WE GROSS SMATZES WILL ALL BE BACK NEXT IN V.K.'S MAG, THE VAULT OF NOWON. 'BYE, NOW, ER... I SAID 'BYE' SO GO ON 'N SCRAM, ALREADY!



...FOR, ALTHOUGH THE MORNING SUN IS SHINING BRIGHTLY, THE DEAD MAN'S BODY CASTS NO SHADOW.



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HORROR



TALES



NO. 333
MAY 1968

FROM THE

CRYPT

STORIES



CHARACTERS



LOCATIONS



ADAPTATIONS



57 98
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DOUBLE-SIZED HORROR!

TEEN
TERROR



NO. 3

TALES

FROM THE

CRYPT



NOV

FEATURING



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

WELHEH! SO YOU'RE BACK FOR MORE GORE, EH, FRENCH? WELL, THIS IS THE SPOT FOR IT! WELCOME TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! THIS IS YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO START THE BRAGG BOLLING IN MY REEKNING-RAG WITH ANOTHER SPINE-TANGLING TALE FROM MY CREEP-COLLECTION. WRITEN YOUR BELTS SO YOU WON'T BE SCARED OUT OF YOUR PANTS, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-GURDLER I CALL...

UNDERTAKING PALLOR



MR. ESPRICK'S BLACK PANEL TRUCK HAD PULLED UP BEFORE HIS MORTUARY, AND SOMEHOW HED' GOTTEN THE SILENT WICKER WITH ITS SPRILY CONTENTS WHEED, WHALE OUT IN THE LITTER-STREAM BACK YARD, THE EDGE HAD CREPT TO THE BACK WINDOW ON TIP-TOES, LIKE SO MANY GREY SHADOWS...LIKE SO MANY MORE, THEY'D PEERED INTO THE PORCELAIN AND GLASS-LINED UNDERTAKING PALLOR WITH WIDE EYES AND CHATTERING TEETH, WHISPERING...

THAT'S OLD MAN ESPRICK'S GROVES HE DIED YESTER-DAY!

MR. ESPRICK'S BETTER READY TO JERK HIM.

I DON'T WANT TO LOOKY'EM SCARED!

JERRY!



THERE IS A MORBID CURIOSITY IN CHILDREN, A STRANGE FASCINATION WITH DEATH. IT HURDS THEM TO THE SCENES OF ACCIDENTS, BUCKS THEM INTO MOVIE THEATERS TO WATCH IT UNFOLD ON SILVER SCREENS, PROMPTS THEM TO MAKE BELIEVE ABOUT IT... AND DRAWS THEM TO WINDOWS IN UNDERTAKING PARLOES.



WHAT'S HE DOIN' DOWN?
HE'S TAKIN' OFF THE GLOVES!
SH-NNH!
WELL HEAR YOU!

DEATH'S THE UNKNOWN IN THE LIFE EQUATION. IT IS THE ULTIMATE FINAL RESULT OF EVERY LIVING EXAMPLE. IT IS THE UNKNOWABLE TO YOUNG MINDS SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS...



NOW HE'S SHARPENIN' HIS SCALP-EL!
I DON'T FEEL NO GOOD!

SO IT WAS ONLY NATURAL FOR CHERBY AND PETE AND BILLY AND PERCY... TO WANT TO SEE MORE OF THIS UNFATHOMABLE PROBLEM. TO WANT TO LEARN WHAT WENT ON BEHIND MR. ESPROCK'S CLOSED MORTUARY DOORS.



IF IT MAKES YOU SICK... DON'T LOOK, PERCY!
LOOK! HE'S SLICIN' OLD MR. ESPROCK'S SKIN AT THE BASE OF HIS NECK...

I'VEDISE THE MORTUARY, DELIVIOUS TO THE WIDE PRYING EYES THAT FOLLOWED HIS EVERY MOVE, AVERILL ESPROCK LABORED SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY, AS IF HE ENJOYED HIS WORK...



WHAT'S THAT HE'S DOIN', BILLY?
STICKIN' A NEEDLE WITH A FEELER INTO THE GUT HE MADE IN MR. ESPROCK'S NECK!

AND AS HE WORKED, AVERILL HUMMED SOFTLY, FILLING THE MORTUARY WITH HIS MUTED GREEN MUSIC...



HE'S TURNIN' ON SOME KIND OF MOWER!
HE'S PUMPIN' OUT THE BLOOD, THAT'S WHAT HE'S DOIN'!
AWWAAA...

THE PUMP BEGAN TO CHUG, GUNGLING THE SCARLET LIQUID OUT OF THE DEAD BODY THROUGH THE PULSATING TUBE AND SENDIN' IT INTO THE PORCELAIN SINK.



BILLY! WE COULD CHARGE THE REST OF THE GANG ADMIRERS TO WATCH THIS!
MR. ESPROCK! YOU'RE ALWAYS THINKIN' OF WAYS 'T MAKE MONEY!

AFTER A WHILE THE GUNGLING STOPPED AND THE PUMP RAN QUIETLY...



THE BLOOD'S ALL PUMPED OUT!
NOW WHAT?
HE'S TAKIN' DOWN THAT BIG JAR OF LIQUID!

MR. ESPROCK RIPPED THE HOSE THAT RAN OFF INTO THE RED-STAINED PORCELAIN SINK AND PUSHED IT INTO THE NECK OF THE JAG WITH THE COLORLESS LIQUID.



I'LL BET A NICKEL THAT'S EMBALMING FLUID!

I'LL BET YOU'RE RIGHT!

I'M GOIN' HOME, MY PAIR'S BEEN SICK AND STUCK AROUND, PERCY!

EVERILL PRESSED A SWITCH. THE PUMP REVERSED ITSELF. THE GURGling BEGAN AGAIN. THE COLORLESS LIQUID IN THE JAG BEGAN TO SLOWLY DISAPPEAR, FORCED INTO MR. GROVES' EMPTY ARTERIES.



SEE? WHAT'D I TELL YOU!

OHAY, SMAY! GUY? SO YOU KNOW EVERYTHING!

REALLY, PELLERS, POP'S BEEN IN BED, AN.

STUCK AROUND, PERCY!

THE LAST DROP OF THE EMBALMING FLUID GARGLED OUT OF THE JAG AS THE LAST DROP OF A SODA IS SUCKED FROM A FOURTEEN OZ. GLASS THROUGH A PRAYED STRAW. MR. ESPROCK CHUT OFF THE MOTOR.



IS HE COOM?

WAIT AN' SEET!

LISTEN, SOMEBODY JUST CAME IN THE FRONT DOOR.

SOMEWHERE IN THE HOSPITAL, A BELL TINKLED. MR. ESPROCK STIFFENED. A FIGURE SNEPT ASIDE THE CURTAINS AND CAME INTO THE BACK ROOM.



HOWDY, EVERELL! I COME FOR MY GUY!

ANYBODY SEE YOU COME IN, MORTY?

THE KIDS PEERING THROUGH THEIR PEEP-HOLE WHISPERED EXCITEDLY.



IT'S MR. GROOVY! THE DROWNIEST! WHAT'S HE' WANT?

LISTEN! MAYBE WE'LL FIND OUT!

MORE... HOBBY BAR ME. HOW MUCH DO WE MAKE THIS TIME?



FIFTY BUCKS EACH! THAT'S THE BEST I COULD DO! THE GROVES' FAMILY DON'T HAVE MUCH MONEY. I FINALLY TALKED 'EM INTO THE TWO HUNDRED DOLLAR FUNERAL. I CLEAR A HUNDRED ON THAT ONE!

FIFTY BUCKS? FOR GUYIN' OUT LOUD, IT DON'T PAY TO TAKE SUCH CHANCES FOR THAT LITTLE DOUN.



WELL, NEXT TIME YOU POISON A PRESCRIPTION, MAKE SURE IT'S FOR SOMEBODY WHO CAN AFFORD A BIG FUNERAL.

WHAT'S YA THINK?
I GET A CHANCE TO DO
IT EVERY DAY IN THE
WEEK! I GOT TO
WAIT TILL SOMEBODY
GETS SICK FIRST...
AND NEEDS A
PRESCRIPTION FILLED!

I KNOW!
I KNOW!
DON'T
GET
SICK!

I'M NOT SURE. IN
FACT, I FEEL PRETTY
GOOD! THE NEXT
FUNERAL YOU GET
WILL BE THE BIGGEST
ONE THIS TOWN'S
EVER SEEN!

WHO'S
SICK,
BOY?

NOBODY BUT
THE RICHEST
MAN IN TOWN.
AND I DELIVERED
HIS PRESCRIPTION
FIVE MORNINGS!

HEH, HEH!
GOOD! GOOD!
WE OUGHT TO
FOUN BY
FOUNYNT...

OUTSIDE, THE BOYS LOOK AT EACH OTHER, WORRIED.

THE BIGGEST BUY IN
TOWN?? WHO THAT'S
PERCY'S OLD MAN...

HEY, WHERE
IS PERCY?

HE'S NOT
HERE!

DO YOU THINK
WE HEARD?

I DON'T THINK
SO! GUESS WHAT'LL
WE DO?

G'WEN!

BILLY AND CHRIS AND PETE TOOK OUT OF THE ALLER-
WAY BEHIND MR. ESPROCK'S MORTUARY AND RAN ALL
THE WAY TO PERCY'S HOUSE. WHEN THEY GOT THERE,
THEY FOUND PERCY SITTING ON THE FRONT STEPS,
SOMBER...

PERCY!
MR. BRADY
W. GOTTA
LISTEN
AND MR.
ESPROCK...
HEY, WHAT'S
BROCKING PERCY?

MY... BOY...
MY POP! HE
DIED A LITTLE
WHILE AGO!

BOLLY
BEE!

THEY WERE TOO LATE. THEY STOOD AROUND ANXIOUSLY,
WONDERING WHAT TO SAY TO POOR GRIEVING PERCY, AND
THEN THEY LEFT HIM QUIETLY SOMBER...

IT'S BETTER THAT
PERCY DOESN'T KNOW
THAT MR. BRADY'S
THE SPONGEST,
POISONED HIS
OLD MAN...

... AND THAT HE'S
WORKING IN CANNOTS
WITH MR. ESPROCK,
THE UNDERKAKER...

DO YOU
THINK WE
OUGHT TO
TELL THE
GOSPEL?



AM, THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE US ANYWAY... A COUPLE OF KIDS?

YEAH, WE GOT TO TAKE CARE OF THIS OURSELVES!

BUT, HOW?



THE NEXT DAY, PETE AND BILLY AND CHUCKY WERE AT THEIR PEEP-HOLE, WATCHING MR. ESPROCK ENBALEM PERCY'S FATHER...

HERE COMES MR. ESPROCK!

SH--SH--SH... LISTEN...



HEH, HEH! WELL, AVERILL, DID YOU BRING 'EM BACK?

THOSE BRANDS WORTH! WE CLEAR ONE THOUSAND. THAT'S FIVE HUNDRED APiece!



THAT'S MORE LIKE IT, BO. WHAT'S AVERILL, BO? YOU DON'T LOOK GOOD?

NOT I FEEL ALL RIGHT, MOST? WHY?



I DON'T KNOW! YOU LOOK PALE... NOW DOWN YOU LOOK LIKE YOU NEED A TONIC! I'LL SEND ONE OVER...

DON'T BOTHER, IT'S THE EXERCISE, I GUESS?



OUTSIDE, PETE GRINNED...

I JUST GOT AN IDEA, FELLERS!

TELL US LATER, PETE. LISTEN...



THE FEDERAL'S TOMORROW MORNING, MOST. I'LL PROBABLY GET PAID TOMORROW NIGHT! MEET ME AT THE USUAL PLACE, AND I'LL GIVE YOU YOUR SHARE.

FINE, SAY AROUND MIDNIGHT.



WE'S GOING? WHAT'S YOUR IDEA, PETE?

CHERRY, YOU GET DOWN TO SPURDY'S BURE STORE AND YOU HANG AROUND IN FRONT... STAY THERE ALL DAY IF YOU HAVE TO!



WHEN HE GIVES YOU A PACKAGE TO DELIVER TO MR. ESPROCK, DON'T BRING IT TO HIM, BRING IT TO OUR CLUBHOUSE, UNDERSTAND?

RIGHT?

AFTER CHUBBY LEFT, PETE TOLD HIS PLAN TO BILLY. THEN THEY WENT AROUND TO THE FRONT OF MR. ESPROCK'S RESTAURANT AND WAITED. THEY WAITED UNTIL MR. ESPROCK CAME OUT.



HELLO, MR. ESPROCK. HOW 'T BAY, THAT'S ESPROCK?

HOW 'T BROWN?

YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD, MR. ESPROCK!

YOU LOOK PALE, MR. ESPROCK. YOU LOOK SICK!



YOU DON'T KNOW'S DOWN WITH SOMETHIN', MR. BOYS. MR. ESPROCK!

MR. ESPROCK WENT BACK INTO THE RESTAURANT THE KIDS DARTED AROUND TO THE BACK WARDON IN TIME TO HEAR...



HELLO, MORT? AVERELL? SET ER. MAYBE YOU'D BETTER SEND THAT TONIC OVER AFTER ALL? I DO FEEL KINDA... KINDA NOW DOWN!

OUTSIDE MR. BRADY'S STORE, CHUBBY WAITED PATIENTLY. FINALLY, MR. BRADY CAME OUT...



HOW'D YOU LIKE TO MAKE A JACKOL, CHUBBY? DELIVER THIS PACKAGE OVER T' MR. ESPROCK AT THE UNDER-DEKING PARLOR.

SURE THING, MR. BRADY!

CHUBBY TOOK THE PACKAGE AND RUSHED STRAIGHT TO THE CLUB HOUSE WITH IT. PETE AND BILLY WERE WAITING...



HERE IT IS!

GRAB, PUPP IT OUT...

HERE'S THE RAT-POISON...

MR. ESPROCK OPENED THE DOOR TO HIS RESTAURANT TO SEE CHUBBY STANDING BEFORE HIM, HOLDING A STRAY CAT IN ONE HAND AND THE BOTTLE OF 'TONIC' IN THE OTHER...



MR. BRADY ASKED ME TO DELIVER THIS, MR. ESPROCK!

OH, THANK YOU, CHUBBY!

CHUBBY HELD OUT THE BOTTLE OF 'TONIC', LETTING IT SLIP FROM HIS FINGERS!



HERE TARE... DOOPS!

LOOK OUT, FOU...GLIMSY...

THE BOTTLE SMASHED INTO A THOUSAND GLITTERING FRAGMENTS AND THE 'TONIC' POOLED OUT OVER THE RESTAURANT FLOOR. CHUBBY RELEASED THE STRAY CAT...



GOLLY! I'M SORRY, MR. ESPROCK... L.E. HERE, KITTY!

GET THAT CAT OUT OF HERE!

THE CAT WAS BUSILY LAPPING UP THE SPILLED TONG. CHUBBY HESITATED...

I SAID GET THAT CAT OUT OF HERE!

LOOK, MR. ESPROCK!



THE CAT RAVAGED, FILLED WITH THE KID-POISON. IT BOVEALED AND ROLLED OVER...

WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?

GOOD LORD... IT'S DEAD!



MR. ESPROCK STUCK HIS FINGER INTO THE POOL OF 'TONG' AND SWIPPED IT...

WHY THAT DUTTY DOUBLE-CROOKS... THIS IS POISON!

WELL, I GOT TO GO, MR. ESPROCK!



THE NEXT DAY, PETE'S FATHER'S FUNERAL WAS HELD IN A STEADY DOWNPOUR. THE BOYS WATCHED FROM AFR...

THINK ESPROCK FELL FOR IT?

WE'LL SEE JOHNNY... WHEN HE MEETS ESPROCK!



LATE THAT NIGHT THE KIDS WAITED FOR MR. ESPROCK TO EMERGE FROM HIS MORTUARY. TOWARD MIDNIGHT, HE CAME OUT. THEY FOLLOWED HIM AT A SAFE DISTANCE, AS HE MADE HIS WAY SLOWLY OUT OF TOWN...

HE'S HEADED FOR THE CEMETERY!

W-W-WHAT?

Cheer!



PETE AND BILLY AND CHUBBY FOLLOWED MR. ESPROCK INTO THE CEMETERY. MR. BRADY WAS WAITING...

THAT JOE AVERILL?

SURPRISED BRADY? YOU THOUGHT I'D BE DEAD BY NOW, DIDN'T YOU?



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, AVERILL?

I'M TALKING ABOUT THAT POISONED TONG YOU BENT ME, MORT. BRADY, THE BOY DROPPED IT!



THE KNIFE IN MR. ESPROCK'S HAND GLINTED IN THE MOONLIGHT...

WEE-KILL! DON'T YOU TRY TO KILL ME, BRUDY! WELL NOW... I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!

WEE-KILL! DON'T YOU TRY TO KILL ME, BRUDY! WELL NOW... I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!



MR. ESPROCK BROUGHT THE KNIFE DOWN INTO MR. BRUDY'S CHEST. MR. BRUDY'S SCREAM ECHOED THROUGH THE GLEAM CEMETERY.



SUDDENLY THE NIGHT WAS VERY STILL, SAVE FOR AVERILL ESPROCK'S HEAVY BREATHING AS HE STOOD OVER MORT BRUDY'S PROTESTFULLY SPRAWLED BODY... AND THEN...



MR. ESPROCK SPUN AROUND, THE KNIFE GRIPPED TIGHTLY IN HIS HAND.

WHO'S THERE? O'MOM! LET'S RUN FOR IT!



THE BOYS BEGAN TO RUN. MR. ESPROCK SCREAMED AFTER THEM.

COME BACK HERE, YOU... O'MOM! I CAN'T RUN... FASTER.



THEY RAN WILDLY OVER THE GRAVE-MOUNDS... THE THREE TERRIFIED BOYS WITH MURDEROUS MR. ESPROCK CLOSE BEHIND THEM, BRANDISHING THE BLOODY KNIFE...



SUDDENLY, MR. ESPROCK PLUNGED FORWARD, SPLATTERING HIS HEAD UPON THE SHARP CORNER OF A BOWLIE CUT TOMBSTONE...



AND WHEN THE BOYS CAUTIOUSLY RETURNED TO WHERE HE LAY...

HE'S DEAD? LOOK! LOOK AT THE BLOOD ON THE HEADSTONE! IT'S FRESH! FRESH! FRESH!



HEH, HEH! THERE'S A STRIKING RING-UP TO A TERROR-TALE, ER, CREEPY NON, THE BRILL-KEEPER AWAITS WITH HIS TALE OF GOTTING AND GADGETS, SO I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO MR. I'LL ON YOU LATER.



TALKING 'BOUT BLOOD, AS THE FRENCH BEE-BOPPER SAID WHEN HE SAW THE BLOLLOTINE... 'MAN, DID THAT CRAZY BARBER CHAIN!'

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH, AND NOW, FOLLOWS, IF YOU WILL VENTURE INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, YOUR HOST, THE VAULT-KEEPER WILL ENTERTAIN YOU. FOR THIS,

BY OFFERING IN *C.F.'S* MAG., I HAVE CHOSEN A GRAND TALE. HEH? IT'S TOLD BY A GRAVE! SO, CUDDLE UP TO THAT COMFY OVER THERE AND I'LL BEGIN THE DRAMA OF DREAD AND DEATH CALLED...

THE CRAVING GRAVE!



THE WIND BLOWS SADLY AMONG THE BARBED AND BENT TREES AROUND ME. IT WHISPERS PAST THE GOLD STONE MONUMENTS THAT THE OTHERS PROUDLY HOLD UPWARD TOWARD THE NIGHT SKY, BUT UPON MY BREAST THERE IS NO GOLD STONE FOR THE WIND TO CURE OVER. I LIE SILENT WITH AN EMPYRENS WITHIN ME... A YEARNING. THE OTHERS SING CONTENTEDLY, SHIFTING AND CRACKING, EMBRACING THEIR CHARGES... THEIR BORN CHILDREN. BUT I AM BARREN... FRUITLESS. BENEATH MY MOUNDED OUTER SKIN-CRUST, NO RISE CHARGE LIES, NOTHING. I AM *LOVELY*. I AM *WAITING*...



I AM AN *UNDISCOVERED* GRAVE, WHYING WITH THE DYING WIND... WAITING FOR MY LEGS/LIMBS TO END...
WAITING FOR A BODY!

I HAVE WAITED LIKE THIS THROUGH THE CENTURIES, WATCHING THE OTHERS AROUND ME, EACH IN THEIR TURN, OPEN WIDE THEIR TEENING MOUTHS AND TAKE IN THEIR WARDS, CRODING THEM HAPPILY WITHIN THEIR EARTHSHOES.



LOWER THE
COFFIN...

...SOS...SOS...

I HAVE LAID FLOWERS THROUGH THE PAGES AND THE TIMS, HEARING THEM NURDING THEIR FOSTER-CHILDREN, AND LONGING FOR MY OWN. ON SUNDAYS, I HAVE LISTENED TO THE BOURNERS AND REMEMBERS COME AND CRY UPON THE OTHERS AND PLACE FLOWERS UPON THEIR BOSOMS.



...SOS...SOS...

HE WAS A GOOD MAN...

ON NIGHTS LIKE THIS ONE... WHEN THE SKY IS OVERCAST WITH LOW HANGING RAIN-CLOUDS, WHEN I CAN SEE NO STARS... I CAN ONLY LIE AND LISTEN TO THE HAPPY CHATTERING OF THE BRIDES AROUND ME GUARDING, PROTECTING, CARING FOR THEIR SPOGS. I CAN ONLY LIE AND LISTEN AND YEARN. I YEARN FOR THE DAY WHEN I, TOO, WILL REACH FORTH AND DRAW IN MY DEATH-PETALS AND HOLD IT FIRM, SUCKLING IT WITH MY GAMPNESS...

AND ALWAYS WHEN THE WIND COMES UP ACROSS THE GREAT WAVES, IT CARRIES THEM LAUGHING TO ME. THEY LAUGH BECAUSE THEY HAVE FULFILLED THEIR PURPOSE. THEY LAUGH BECAUSE THEY ARE NO LONGER EMPTY AND BARRER AND CHILDLESS. THEY LAUGH AT ME.



HERE IT IS,
WILLIE.

LET'S GET TO IT,
AL. NOT MUCH
TIME LEFT TILL
MORNIN'!



WHY HARD
AS A ROCK?

HERE, USE
THE PICK...

BUT, WHY? WHAT IS THAT I HEAR? VOICES IN THE WIND... VOICES IN THE NIGHT... VOICES OVER ME? AND WHAT IS THAT I FEEL? GOLD STEEL BENTING MY CRUST... CRACKING OPEN MY EARTH-SKIN.

THERE IS A TREMBLING DOWN DEEP WITHIN ME... A SURGE OF ECSTASY AND ANTICIPATION. THE WIND DIES... AND THE LAUGHTER DIES...

ALL THESE YEARS OF WAITING. ALL THESE YEARS OF FLOWING AND TEARING AND DYING. THEY'RE ALMOST OVER. THOSE MEN UPON MY GREST... THEY'RE ALIVE AND SOFT...



WHY? WHY DON'T PEOPLE DIE IN THE SUMMERTIME... WHEN THE GROUND IS SOFT?

I'LL TELL MY CONGRESS-MAN THEY'LL PASS A LAWY PASS A LAWY



NOW OLD
WAS ONE?

SIXTY-THREE...



AND NOW IT IS MORNING. I LIE WITH MY INSIDES TORN FROM ME AND HEAVED UP AT MY SIDE. I LIE DOWN, FEELING THE SUNLIGHT. THE COLD AIR, I HEAR THE GRUNCHING STEPS THAT I HAVE HEARD SO OFTEN... HEAR THE GRUNTS OF THE PALLEDGARDS THAT HAVE NEVER UNTIL THIS DAY DELIVERED INTO ME. AND I SMILE...



THE COFFIN IS LOWERED. I REACH UPWARD FOR IT, ACCEPTING IT, FEELING OF ITS SMOOTHNESS, AND SENSING OF ITS CONTENTS... MY DEATH-WARD, MY CORPSE-CHARGER... MY OWN...



THE GRAVE DIGGERS TRUDGE OFF, I AM FULFILLED. THE EMPTYNESS WITHIN ME IS GONE...THE YEARNING VANISHED. THE BODY LIES UNARMED INSIDE ME. I WHISPER TO IT.. SOOTHING IT...COMFORTING IT IN ITS FINAL REST

THE DAYS AND WEEKS PASS, BUT THE BODY WITHIN MY FOLD DOES NOT LIE AT REST. THE BODY WITHIN ME IS NOT AT PEACE. THERE IS A STIRRING INSIDE THE COFFIN NEXT-LINE IN MY BOBOM. A FLUTTERING... A SCRATCHING...



I LISTEN WITH A DRUNKEN JOY TO THE CEREMONY, FEELING THE MOURNERS' FEET JOY TO MY GRIEF. THERE ARE NOT MANY MOURNERS... A NEPHEW, HIS WIFE, AND A LAWYER-FRIEND. BUT I DO NOT CARE. IT IS NOT THE MOURNERS' DUES I AM INTERESTED IN. IT IS THE ONE FOR WHOM THEY GRIEVE.



THE MOURNERS LEAVE. THE GRAVE DIGGERS STEP FORWARD WITH THEIR SHOVELS. I EMBRACE THE COFFIN MORE AND MORE AS THEY RETURN. MY SOIL-INGARDED TO ME. THEY STAND, FINALLY, UPON MY REPAIRED BODY, TAMING DOWN MY OUTER BOON, STITCHING UP THE SOUND.



THE BODY TELLS ME HER STORY. HER NAME IS CYNTHIA MEADOWS. SHE WAS, LIKE ME, LONELY ALL HER LIFE. SHE'D REMAINED UNMARRIED. BARRER, FRUITLESS... YEARNING FOR THE THING HER MARRIED SISTER ENJOYED



THE BODY STIRRING WITHIN ME TELLS ME OF THE LONELY YEARS... THE LONGING SHE'D FELT FOR A CHILD OF HER OWN... AND I UNDERSTAND, HADN'T I FELT THE SAME AS SHE?

MAMA SAYS YOU'RE AN OLD MAID, AUNT CYNTHIA. WHAT'S AN OLD MAID?

IT'S... IT'S A WOMAN WHO NEVER MARRIES, ROLAND. A WOMAN WHO HAS NO CHILDREN OF HER OWN.



AND THE EIGHTY YEARS HAD CRAWLED BY... AS THEY CRAWLED FOR ME, SHE MADE WISE INVESTMENTS OF THE INHERITANCE SHE'D SHARED WITH HER SISTERS, AND SHE'D GROWN WEALTHY. WHILE HER SISTERS...

GEORGE'S BUSINESS FAILED, CYNTHIA. HE'S LOST EVERY CENT WE HAD!

I'M SORRY, MYRA. I'LL TRY TO HELP YOU!



MYRA'S FALLEN ILL SUDDENLY. SHE'S DEAD WITHIN THE WEEK...

WHAT... SOB... WHAT ABOUT ROLAND, CYNTHIA? WHAT WILL I DO WITH HIM?

I'LL... I'LL LOOK AFTER HIM, GEORGE... IF YOU WANT ME TO.



AND SO, THE LONELY YEARS HAD ENDED FOR CYNTHIA AS MY LONELY YEARS HAD ENDED. SHE'S TAKEN ROLAND TO HER ROOM AS IT'S TAKEN HER...

BUT I WANT MY MONEY!

YOU MOTHER HAS SOME IDEA, ROLAND. SHE'S COME AWAY FOR A LONG TIME.



SHE FELT THE LAUGHTER... THE SCORN AROUND HER AS IT FELT SCORN. SHE'D WATCHED THE OTHER WOMEN SHE KNEW MARRY AND HAVE CHILDREN, AND SHE'D LONGED AS I'D HAD...

SOB... SOB...

HURRY, EDITH! DINNER'S READY!

YES, MOMMA!



AND SHE'D WAITED THROUGH THE YEARS... AS I'D WAITED... FINALLY...

WHAT IS IT, GEORGE?

IT'S MYRA, CYNTHIA. SHE'S DESPERATELY ILL. PLEASE... COME, QUICKLY!



ROLAND'S ARRIVAL IN CYNTHIA'S HOUSE HAD HEARD THE END OF THE LAUGHTER AROUND HER... THE END OF SCORN... JUST AS HER ARRIVAL HAD HEARD THE END OF SCORN FOR ME...

EDWARD! DINNER'S READY, HURRY!

YES, AUNT CYNTHIA!

HURRY!



CYNTHIA, TOO, HAD BEEN FULFILLED. SHE'D GUARDED ROLAND...COMFORTED HIM, AND HE'D GROWN INTO MANHOOD... BUT THERE WAS A STINGING WITHIN HIM...JUST AS NOW,CYNTHIA STIRS.



I'M GOING AWAY, AUNT CYNTHIA. I CAN'T STAY HERE ANY LONGER.

ROLAND! DON'T LEAVE ME! PLEASE.

THE SOMETHING, CLAWING BODY WITHIN ME TELLS HER ROLAND HAD LEFT HER...DESPITE HER PLEADING...LEFT HER TO THE LAUGHTER AND THE SCORN AROUND HER DICE MORE...



ROB... ROB...

AND THEN SHE'S DISCOVERED ~~HOW~~ ROLAND HAD LEFT SO SUDDENLY.

POOR CYNTHIA. HOW SORRY I FEEL FOR HER...TO YEARN FOR SOMETHING...TO YEARN FOR IT FOR SO LONG...TO FINALLY GET IT, AND THEN TO LOSE IT ONCE MORE. SHE TELLS ME OF HOW BROKEN-HEARTED SHE WAS...

SHE TELLS ME HOW SHE'S TRIED TO FORGET HIM, SHE TELLS ME HOW SHE INVESTED HER ~~WAS~~ MONEY TO MAKE HER WEALTHIER AND WEALTHIER. AND THEN...SIX YEARS LATER...



THE MONEY? I HAD THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS IN THIS DRAWER. IT'S GONE!



ROLAND. ROB... ROLAND.



YES, WHO IS IT? WHO...~~ROLAND!~~ YOU'VE COME BACK!

YES, AUNT CYNTHIA, AND I'VE BROUGHT SOMEONE...

CYNTHIA'D BEEN SO GLAD TO SEE ROLAND SHE'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN THE CRIME HE'D COMMITTED WHEN HE'D LEFT...

THEY'D COME TO LIVE WITH HER. ROLAND'D BEGGED CYNTHIA'S FORGIVENESS...



THIS IS MY WIFE EVELYN, AUNT CYNTHIA. THIS IS MY AUNT CYNTHIA.

ROLAND'S TOLD ME SO MUCH ABOUT YOU, AUNT CYNTHIA!



I WAS FOUL AND FOOLISH, AUNT CYNTHIA. IT WAS SPENDING OF ME TO TAKE THE MONEY! I'M SORRY!

THERE, THERE, ROLAND. IT HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO!

SO ONCE MORE THE LAUGHTER AND SCORN AROUND CYNTHIA'S BED ARMY. ROLAND HAD COME BACK, AND HE'D BROUGHT HIS WIFE. CYNTHIA HAD TWO CHILDREN NOW...



YOU DON'T KNOW HOW HAPPY YOU'VE MADE AN OLD LONELY WOMAN, ERIC... ROLAND?

WE BOTH LOVE YOU, AUNT CYNTHIA!

YES, AUNT CYNTHIA.

BUT THEN CYNTHIA TELLS ME WHAT ROLAND AND ERIC HAD PLANNED...



ONCE WE SET HER TO MAKE OUT A WILL LEAVING ALL OF HER DOUBT TO US...

...WE HAD TO KIDNAP HER OFF!

AND NOW I KNOW WHY THE BODY I EMBRACE WITHIN MY EARTH-BORN IS NOT AT PEACE. NOW I KNOW WHY IT SCRATCHES AND STRUGGLES. CYNTHIA MARRIED HAD BEEN MURDERED...



THE BODY WITHIN ME TURNS AND PUSHES AND SCRATCHES. I TRY TO STOP IT... TRY TO MAKE MY INSIDES HARD... BUT IT IS DETERMINED. THEN, ONE NIGHT... MONTHS AFTER I HAD FIRST EMBRACED IT... THE BODY FLEW UPWARD INTO THE COOL AIR... PUSHING OUTWARD PAST MY BRIST-RAIN...



HER NECK AND NEPHEW HAD PUSHED HER DOWN A LONG FLIGHT OF CELLAR STAIRS. THEY'D TOLD THE DOCTOR...



WE HEARD HER SCREAM AND FALL! WE CAME AS FAST AS WE COULD WHEN WE GOT HERE... SHE...

WHAT A HORRIBLE HORRIBLE ACCIDENT! TOO...

SHE'S... SHE'S DEAD!

DESPITE MY PLEASING, IT TORTERS OFF... ACROSS THE OTHER ORANGE... INTO THE COLD WIND... THE WIND THAT CARRIED BACK TO ME ONCE AGAIN THE LAUGHTER AND SCORN OF THE OTHERS...



AND WITHIN ME THERE IS AN EMPYNESS AND A YEARNING ONCE MORE. I AM LONELY ONCE MORE.

WE WERE THE SAME, CYNTHIA AND I... *BARREN AND FRUITLESS AND WAITING*, AND THEN THE WAITING ENDED FOR BOTH OF US. ROLAND WAS GIVEN TO HER, AND SHE TO ME... BUT LIKE ROLAND LEFT CYNTHIA TO THE LAUGHTER AND THE SCORN, SHE TOO HAS LEFT ME. NOW, I CAN ONLY DO AS SHE DID, TRY TO FORGET...



IT IS CYNTHIA. SHE HOLDS THEM IN HER VOICE-LIKE GRIP AND STAMMERS ACROSS THE OTHER GRAVES... THE OTHER GRAVES THAT HAVE SUDDENLY STOPPED LAUGHING. SHE HOLDS THEM... ROLAND AND ERIC... HOLDS THEM OUT TO ME...



CYNTHIA IS SOME AWAY, NOW. THE SCREAMING HAS STOPPED. YES, WE *ARE* ALIVE, SHE AND I. EACH WAITED... EACH GOT WHAT SHE WAITED FOR... ONLY TO LOSE IT AGAIN. BUT WHAT WE LOST WAS EVENTUALLY RETURNED TO US. ROLAND'S AND ERIC'S TWISTED SUPPLICATED BODIES LIE DEEP WITHIN ME, PRESSED AGAINST MY EARTH-SOULS. AND NOW IT IS *I* WHO CAN LAUGH... LAUGH AT THE OTHERS...



...FOR NOW I KNOW MY *REAL* FULFILLMENT. I *WASN'T* *LAUGH* THE OTHERS AFTER ALL. THEY'RE ALL *SHRILL* GRAVES. I AM A *DOUBLE* ONE!

THE WIND BLOWS EARLY ACROSS THE CHARLED AND BENT TREES AROUND ME. IT WHISPERS PAST THE COULD STONES I LIE SILENT WITH THE SHAPINGS WITHIN ME. AND I WAIT. AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, FAR AWAY... I HEAR IT. THE SCREAMING...



SOMETHING IS COMING TOWARD ME, DRAGGING THE SCREAMING BEHIND IT...

... AND I REASON FOR THEM. CYNTHIA HELPS ME REACH. SHE SHOWS ASIDE MY SHIN-CRUST, SCOPES OUT MY INSIDES, PUSHES THEM OUTWARDS, INTO MY EMBRACE...



HEH, HEH, AND SO, KIDDIES... OUR LITTLE *HELP-FAR* ENDS ON THIS *GRAVE* NOTE. ROLAND AND ERIC WERE *PUNISHED* FOR THEIR CRIME... *BURIED ALIVE*... BY CYNTHIA'S *DOUBTS*, AND OUR LITTLE *GRAVE* NOTED THEM *HAPPY* EVER AFTER. SO NOW... *AWAY* WHERE'S CYNTHIA THERE SAYS, YOU ARE? WHY SHE JUST WANDERED AROUND TILL SHE FOUND SOME *OTHER*



LENSSTONE GRAVE AND DROPPED IN ON *ME* FOR AN EXTENDED VISIT. 'BYE, NOW!'

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

BECAUSE I HAVE RECEIVED SUCH A FLOOD OF REQUESTS LATE... THE EDITOR'S MOTHER-IN-LAW... I HAVE DECIDED TO TELL YOU ANOTHER INFANTILE INSANITY. AFTER CAREFUL AND INTENSE RESEARCH, I HAVE DISCOVERED THE TRUE FACTS BEHIND THE GRIM FAIRY TALE ABOUT THE PRINCESS WHO SLEPT ALL THOSE YEARS. YOU KNOW... THE ONE CALLED...

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY!



ONCE UPON A TIME, LONG, LONG AGO, IN A KINGDOM FAR AWAY... EVEN FURTHER THAN BROOKLYN, MAYBE... THERE STOOD A CASTLE, COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY A HIGH IMPENET... IMPENETRA... IMPENETRA... IT WAS A THICK GROWTH OF BRAMBLES, ALL THORNY AND WHAD-NOT... AND TO THIS CASTLE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY THE IMPENET... IMPENET... THE STUFF, CAME A PRINCE...

PARSON BE, MY GOOD MAN...
WHAT PLACE IS THIS?

HUNT!

I SAID, WHAT PLACE IS THIS? WHO
RESIDES IN YON PALACE COMPLETELY
SURROUNDED BY THAT IMPENET...
IMPENET... THAT BRAMBLE
FOREST?

SO WHO
WANTS
TO KNOW?



SO, IT IS I... THE HERO OF THIS MISERABLE PICTURE. CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING!

PLEASED TO MEET YOU! I'M MELVIN!



MELVIN??



LIKE I SAID, MELVIN MELVIN?... AND BEHOLD IN YOU CHATTLE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY THAT THORNY OVERGROWTH?

BEYOND THAT IMPENETRABLE THAT IMPACT THAT... SPINABLE... SLEEPY... SLEEPS THE SLEEPING BEAUTY... SLEEPING!



ANY THE SLEEPING BEAUTY... FEAR BARRON IN DISTRESS... AWAITING HER RESCUE... WHEN I WILL FOREVER GARRY OUT!

CAN IT, BARTER! THAT BRAMBLE BUSH IS IMPENETRABLE... IMPENET... IT'S THINK!



FEAR NOT, MY GOOD MAN... I, CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING, WILL REScue MY WAY THROUGH THAT BUSH... WITH THIS...

LOOKING BALDING... SHIRT AND CIGARETTES... A SOLID GOLD PLATED BOY SCOUT KNIFE!



WHEN I OBTAINED BY TEARING OFF THE TOP FROM A LARGE BLUE BUSH AND HIDING IT AWAY WITH MY BARE AND ADDRESS...

THE DIRTY BROODS... THEY NEVER BENT WE BURE!



TELL ME, MY GOOD MAN... WHAT IS THE LEGEND OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTY?

OH THE SQUARE! HE WON'T KNOW THE LEGEND!



WHY DOES THE SLEEPING BEAUTY SLEEP?

WHAT A SLEEP! EVERYBODY KNOWS THE STORY OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTY!



SO?

SO HOW SHOULD I KNOW?



ISN'T IT TRUE, MY GOOD MAN, THAT MANY YEARS AGO, A KING AND QUEEN LIVED IN THAT CASTLE?

IT FIGURED!

AND THE KING AND QUEEN WANTED A CHILD...VERY BABY...

IT FIGURED!

AND FINALLY, THE QUEEN PRESENTED THE KING WITH A SOUNDING BABY GIRL...

CATCH, IRVING?

HA HA HA!

NOT SO HAAS! JOSEPHINE!



THE KING WAS SO OVERJOYED WITH HIS NEW PRINCESS, THAT HE ISSUED AN INVITATION...

HERE IS A LIST OF EVERYBODY WHO IS ANYBODY WANTS THEM TO A FEAST... IN HONOR OF MY NEW DAUGHTER...

YES, YOUR MAJESTY!

THE NERDS OF THE KINGDOM FLOCKED TO THE FEAST...ER...PEASED TO THE FEAST...ER...THEY CAME TO EAT...

SOME SPREAD!

IT MUST BE HELIX, 'CAUSE JAR DON'T SHAKE LIKE THAT...

BUT THE KING, WHO WAS A FURNITURE KING, HAD FORGOTTEN TO INVITE ONE BIG WHEEL...

AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... YOU WILL ALL MAKE A PREDICTION CONCERNING THE HAPPY FUTURE OF MY NEW DAUGHTER!

O'NOW, ETHEL! THE PARTY'S GETTIN' HOT!



THIS BIG WHEEL WAS FIT TO BE TIED, HEH, HEH... GET IT? THEY TIED? WHEEL? TIE ON THE WHEELS ON, NEVER MIND! ANYWAY, THIS BIG WHEEL ROLLED IN AT THE HEART OF THE FEASTIVITIES...

YOU WANT A PREDICTION, KING IRVING? ALL RIGHT! I'LL GIVE YOU ONE...THE PRINCESS WILL DIE ON HER EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY...

EVERYONE AT THE FEAST WAS SHOCKED AT THE PREDICTION OF THE BIG-BROT WHO HADN'T INVITED...

OH THE CREEPY!

ALWAYS CLOWNING!

O'NOW, DORAM! CHAIRER!

BUT A THOUGHTFUL KING CALMED THE HORRIFIED GATHERING BY PUTTING IN AICE TWO CENTS...

ON HER EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY, THE PRINCESS WILL NOT DIE, BUT WILL GO TO SLEEP.

WELL, O'NOW, ETHEL! THE PARTY IS GETTIN' HEAT DOLL!





THE PRINCE STOOD UP, BOGARE AND STRONG...

THAT'S BECAUSE NONE OF THEM HAD A SOLID GOLD-PLATED BOY BOGOT KNIFE!



THE PRINCE TURNED TO THE BRAMBLES...

IT IS LATE! SOON IT WILL BE DARK! I MUST HURRY! BYE!



THE BRAVE PRINCE STRUCK OFF INTO THE THICK GROWTH OF THORNY BRAMBLES...

SEE HOW THE LETHALLY ARMED BRANCHES FALL BEFORE THE SEEN BLADE OF MY TRUSTY SOLID GOLD-PLATED BOY BOGOT KNIFE...



HOUR AFTER HOUR, HE HACKED...

WELL, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? IT'S A HARD STORY!



... TIME AND TIME AGAIN, HE PASSED DOWN-UP, UP-DOWN, MUMFIED BODIES OF PRINCE CHARMING WHO HAD WHILLY ATTEMPTED TO REACH THE SLEEPING BEAUTY...

... DROPE ...



... THE MAN WAS JUST BEGINNING TO GET WHEN CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING REACHED THE CASTLE DOOR...

ONE MORE HACK AND I'LL BE THROUGH...



EDITOR'S NOTE: ONE MORE HACK FROM LIKE THIS AND WE'LL ALL BE THROUGH.

FINALLY, THE PRINCE SWUNG OPEN THE CASTLE DOOR...

SLEEPING BEAUTY! I AM HERE!



BREATHLESSLY, HE RUSHED FROM ROOM TO ROOM...

SLEEPING BEAUTY? WHERE ARE YOU?



AND THEN...

HE? THE SLEEPING BEAUTY... SLEEPING!



CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING
STOOD BEFORE THE SLEEPING
SLEEPING BEAUTY...

MAN! WHAT A BEAUTY!



SLOWLY HE BENT AND KISSED HER...



OUTSIDE, THE SUN HAD SET. THE
SLEEPING BEAUTY FLUTTERED HER
EYELIDS... OPENED HER EYES...

IT IS I, SLEEPING BEAUTY!
I HAVE AWAKENED YOU!



THE SLEEPING BEAUTY SAT UP...

ALL THESE YEARS, YOU **SUCKER!**
HAVE SLEPT, UNTIL
I...



WOOF!

ONLY IN THE DAY-
TIME DO I BLEEP,
CHUM!



THE SLEEPING BEAUTY LEAPED
FROM HER BED...

AT NIGHT, I'M **HIDE AWAY!**
I GO OUT INTO THE IMPERIAL...
EMPEROR... THE **BEH** OUT
THERE AND FIND THE **SUCKERS**
WHO ARE TRAPPED IN IT...



THE SLEEPING BEAUTY'S FANGS
BLISTENED...

... AND I DRINK **THEIR BLOOD!**
FOR YOU SEE...



... AS SHE BUNG THEM INTO
CHARMING PRINCE CHARMING'S
THROAT...

I'M A **VAMPIRE..**
SUCKER...

GOOD LORD!



HEH, HEH! WELL, THAT'S MY **OLD**
GRILLER FOR THE MOUTH, CHUM!
HOPE YOU LIKED MY **BRAND NEW**
MURBERT MACHETTE! AND NOW,
I SHALL **THE OLD BITCH'S POT**

BROWING. THE OLD
SAL IS READY
TO FEED YOU
FOUL FANG
AND WIND UP
**MY PEE-
Pee, SO I'LL**
BE SHOVELING
ALONG! HEART!
HOLD YOUR
**EYES...
RIGHT...**



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HELLO, NEXT AND NOW IT'S WIND-UP TIME IN C.K.'S MAD-MAG, AND YOUR HOSTESS IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR, YOUR STEWER OF SCARY STORIES, YOUR DISHER-DUTER OF DELICIOUS DREAMS, THE OLD WITCH, IS READY WITH HER RECEIVING CAULDRON SO TUCK YOUR BRIDLE GUPS UNDER YOUR GOVERNING CHINS AND I'LL BEGIN THE FOOL FARE I CALL...

SHADOW OF DEATH

COME WITH ME TO A LONELY CORNER IN THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SECTION OF A LARGE CITY. OVERHEAD, THE LAST FADING STAR IS FINALLY RETREATING BEFORE THE ADVANCING LIGHT OF DAWN, AND THE SLEEPING CITY IS AWAKENING TO THE SOUNDS OF JINGLING ALARM CLOCKS. BUT LONG BEFORE THE CITY'S OFFICE WORKERS AND BUSY HOUSEWIVES HAVE RISEN FROM THEIR WARM BEDS, EZRA MORTON HAS BEEN ON THE JOB. THERE HE IS NOW, UNLOCKING HIS LITTLE HERBSTAM AND BRINGING WIDE ITS DOORS. NOTICE HOW EZRA LABORS, WINCING IN PAIN. YES, OLD MAN EZRA, EZRA IS AN INVALID... A CRIPPLED NEWSDEALER. EZRA MORTON IS PARALYZED FROM THE WAIST DOWN...



NOTICE THE BUNDLES OF MORNINGS NEWSPAPERS STACKED ON THE COUNTER BESIDE EZRA'S NEWSTAND, READY TO BE UNLOADED AND LAID OUT NEATLY ON DISPLAY. SEE HOW EZRA STUMBLES, SENSING IN HIS WHEELCHAIR AND LIFTING THE HEAVY PACKAGES...



NOW SEE THE DARK AND DESERTED SUBWAY KIOSK NEARBY, INTO WHICH, IN A FEW MINUTES, THE OFFICE-BOUNDED SECRETARIES AND THE FACTORY-BOUNDED LABORERS WILL BEGIN TO POUR, ARMED WITH THE NEWSPAPERS THEY HAVE PURCHASED FROM EZRA'S STAND...



YES, DEAR READER, EZRA SMILES. HE SMILES BECAUSE HE IS CONTENT. FOR THIS IS HIS *LIFE*... ALL THAT MATTERS TO HIM, THIS LITTLE NEWSSTAND, WITH ITS PER HUNDRED DAILY PAPER SALES, IS EZRA'S CASTLE. ITS REASON FOR BEING IS THE LINE DRAWN BETWEEN INDEPENDENCE AND STARVATION FOR HIM. SO EZRA SMILES. BUT EZRA DOES NOT SMILE FOR *LONG*. SUDDENLY EZRA CATCHES SIGHT OF A FIGURE STANDING NEAR THE SUBWAY KIOSK...



AND NOW THE PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO HURRY FROM ALL DIRECTIONS TOWARD THE SUBWAY ENTRANCE. BUT... THE *ONE* MAN WITH THE PAPERS... WHOSE *WEAK* BODY SUFERS TO MEET THEM OR STRONG LESS THAT ARE NOT WITHERED AND PARALYZED AS EZRA'S ARE...



NOW, EZRA IS READY FOR THEM... FOR THE PARADE OF HUMANITY TO RUSH BY HIS STAND AND TOSS ITS COPPER PENNIES UPON HIS PAPERWEIGHTS AND EAT AWAY AT THE STACKS UNTIL ONLY A FEW LAST BATTERED COPIES REMAIN. SEE HOW HE SMILES.



...A MAN CLUTCHING A STACK OF NEWSPAPERS UNDER HIS WIDE ARM...



YES, EZRA DOES NOT SMILE. FEAR STRIPS EZRA'S HELPLESS BODY. THAT MAN... THAT MAN WITH THE PAPERS AND THE *WEAK* BODY... WHOSE *WEAK* BODY SUFERS TO MEET THEM OR STRONG LESS THAT ARE NOT WITHERED AND PARALYZED AS EZRA'S...



EDNA BEGINS TO DO WHAT HE HAS NEVER DONE BEFORE. HE DALLS *OUT*, TRYING TO ATTRACT ATTENTION, CALLING FOR SALES, IMPLORING, REMINDING THE MASS OF HUMANITY WITH HEALTHY LEGS THAT IT HAS ALREADY BOUGHT ITS PAPERS FROM HIM...



PAPER! MORNING PAPER! GET THEM HERE...

MORNING PAPER, WHAT? TOMORROW, YOU, NA'AM?

BUT THE SLEEPY-EYED PEOPLE ARE BLIND. IN THEIR RUSH TO CATCH THEIR TRAINS, THEY DO NOT NOTICE THAT THEY ARE BUYING THEIR MORNING PAPERS FROM SOMEONE NEW...



PLEASE! I'VE HAD THE CORNER FOR SEVEN YEARS! THOSE ARE MY CUSTOMERS! YOU'RE STEALING! PLEASE FINE YOUR OWN CORNER!

DO ME SOMETHIN', SIMPLY! I'VE HAD PAPER! MORNING PAPER...

AND NOW, THE MORNING RUSH HOUR IS ALMOST OVER. EDNA'S PAPER STROKES STRIKE MEN AND WOMEN TOUCHED. THE MAN WITH THE HEALTHY LEGS WAVES TO EDNA...



ALL SOLD OUT, SIMPLY! I'LL COME! SEE YOU TOMORROW!

THE MAN MOVED OFF, EDNA STARES AT THE UNSOLD PAPERS PILED UP IN HIS NEIGHBORING QUARTER...



OH... I'LL... I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SELL THESE NOW...

ALL DAY LONG, EDNA SITS IN HIS WHEELCHAIR TRYING TO SELL HIS PAPERS TO THE PEW-WIG STRAGGLERS BY HIS STAND...



PAPER! GET YOUR PAPER...

FINALLY, DARKNESS BEGINS TO FALL. SOON, EDNA TIES HIS UNSOLD PAPERS INTO BUNDLES AND DEPOSITS THEM ON THE CURB FOR THE TRUCKS TO PICK UP WHEN THEY DELIVER THE NEXT DAY'S EDITIONS...



908...908...

THE NEXT MORNING THE MAN IS THERE AGAIN, HURRYING ABOUT ON HIS STRONG LEGS SELLING HIS PAPERS TO THE URBAN PARADE, WHILE EDNA SITS IN VAIN...



GET YOUR PAPERS HERE!

MORNING PAPER, LADY? THANK YOU...

THE DAYS PASS. EVERY MORNING THE MAN IS THERE, STEALING SALES FROM EZRA. AND EVERY NIGHT, EZRA COUNTS HIS UNCOLO PAPERS AND TIES THEM INTO BUNDLES...



BUT WHAT CAN EZRA DO? WHAT CAN A CRIPPLE DO TO A MAN WITH A HEALTHY STRONG BODY? THE TRUCKMAN LEAVES. EZRA SITS WITH HIS FEELING UNREST EATING...



IT RIDES FROM ITS WHEEL CHAIR, WAVING...



A WEEK GOES BY. TWO, ONE MORNING, A TRUCKMAN WHO DELIVERS EZRA'S PAPERS WARNS HIM.



ABOVE, THE SKY IS JUST BEGINNING TO GROW LIGHT. THE GLOW FROM A NEARBY STREETLAMP CASTS EZRA'S SHADOW ON THE CURB AND STREETWALL.

SUDDENLY, EZRA'S SHADOW LIFTS ITS HEAD FROM ITS HAIR.



IT GLIDES OFF, DOWN THE DESERTED STREET, ON UNSTEADY LEGS...



IT SLIDES ACROSS BRICK WALLS...



...BOARDS FENCES...



...HESITATES BEFORE A HANGING
SHOPE...



IT REACHES IN, FLOCKING THE SHADOW OF THE AXE
HANGING IN THE WINDOW...



...LIFTING AWAY THE SHADOW OF THE SHOVEL, STANDING
AMONG THE GARDEN TOOLS...



...BACK ACROSS BOARD FENCES...



...BACK ACROSS BRICK WALLS...



...TO A FAMILIAR CORNER WHERE A
FAMILIAR SHADOW STANDS WITH
THE SHADOW OF A HUGE BUNDLE OF
PAPERS UNDER ITS ARM...



EXRA'S SHADOW LIFTS THE SHADOW OF THE AXE IT
HAD STOLEN...



THE SHADOWS OF THE PAPERS SCATTER ACROSS THE
BUILDING WALL AS THE FIGURE CRUMPLES, SPURTING
A SHADOW-FOUNTAIN FROM ITS WOUND...



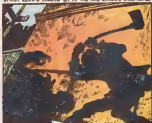
NOW EXRA'S SHADOW DRAGS THE LIFELESS SHADOW
DOWN THE ALLEY BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS...



... AND BRINGS IT DOWN UPON THE FAMILIAR SHADOW
WITH THE PAPERS UNDER ITS ARMS...



EXRA'S SHADOW PEERS AT IT, THE CRUMPLED SHADOW
STIRS. EXRA'S SHADOW LIFTS THE AXE SHADOW ONCE MORE.



...DEPOSITING IT IN AN EMPTY LOT BESIDE A FADED BILL-
BOARD...



WITH THE SHADOW-SHOVEL, EDRA'S SHADOW Digs A SHALLOW SHADOW-GRAVE BESIDE THE BILLBOARD...



...AND PUSHES THE LIFELESS SHADOW IN...



...AND SHOVELS THE SHADOW-SOIL IN UPON IT...

THEN, EDRA'S SHADOW RETURNS TO THE NEWSSTAND WHERE EDRA STILL SITS WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS...



...AND EDRA'S SHADOW ASSUMES EDRA'S POSITION AS EDRA HEARS...



EDRA ROLLS HIS WHEELCHAIR TO THE CRUMPLED FORM OF THE OLD MAN WITH THE HEALTHY LEGS LYING AMONG HIS SCATTERED PAPERS...



LATER, THE MORNING-WASH ATTENDANTS LIFT THE BODY OF THE MAN WHO ALMOST STOLE EDRA'S BUSINESS FROM HIM, AS THEY CARRY IT TO THE WAITING TRUCK, EDRA GASPS...



...FOR, ALTHOUGH THE MORNING SUN IS SHINING BRIGHTLY, THE DEAD MAN'S BODY CASTS NO SHADOW...

WHEN IS THE *HEAVENLY TRIAGE* OF THE WEEK, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? WELL, THAT'S MY *REVOLUTIONARY REGIME* FOR THIS ISSUE, CREeps. NOW IT'S TIME TO PUT OUT THE FIRE UNDER MY HOT AND CLOSE THE DOORS TO THE MOUNT OF FEAR, SO TUGGLE ALONG. WE *SHOULD* REMEMBER WILL ALL BE BACK NEXT IN Y.K.'S MAG, *THE VAULT OF HORROR*. 'BYE, NOW. ER... I SAID 'BYE' SO GO ON 'N SCRAM, ALREADY!

